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ART. I.—HISTORY OF LATIN CHRISTIANITY.

History of Latin Christianity; including that of the Popes to the Pontificate of Nicholas V. By Henry Hart Milman, D.D., Dean of St. Paul's. 3 vols. 8vo. Murray. London. 1854.

It is impossible to lay down any absolute rule for the writing of history. There can be no model work in this field of literature, to serve as a type for subsequent efforts. History may, indeed, be defined in general, a record and judgment of the past, an attempt to trace the phenomena and grasp the laws which are successively evolved in time, as the natural philosopher investigates the permanent relations of facts which coexist in space; and this large conception of the subject suggests, no doubt, a certain end as the legitimate one, and certain conditions of execution, apart from which it cannot be attained. But all true history implies a searching out by the individual historian of the facts which he has to recover and preserve (*ιστορία* in its original and proper sense), and a distinct representation of them to himself as foregone realities. Such an undertaking opens a very wide space for the free play of the *subjective* element of inquiry. To the *objective* (if we may be pardoned the use of these convenient distinctions), that which *was*, in all its *actual* relations, independent of the apprehension of the contemplating mind, we can never do more than simply approximate. The most

comprehensive and dispassionate intellect, aided by the liveliest imagination, cannot embrace it on all sides. He who is the most earnest in his search, will seize it most firmly and most distinctly on the side which leaves the deepest impression on his own cast of mind, and most powerfully attracts his peculiar sympathies. To possess any character or interest whatever, every history must reflect strongly the conceptive idiosyncrasy of the recording mind, and reproduce, with at least an approach to reality, the facts for which it has an affinity. The pale and colourless abstractions which affect the merit of complete impartiality, and aim at universal comprehensiveness, give us back less of the past, and are farther from truth on all sides, than the narrations which transmit a living image of the only aspect of the subject, capable of being clearly seen and of deeply arresting the attention. We are told of insects whose circular, projecting heads are studded all over with eyes; so that we must suppose, they see behind, and before, and on each side—τά τ' ἰόντα, τὰ τ' ἑσόμενα, πρὸ τ' ἰόντα: but neither the corporeal nor the mental vision of man is constituted in this way. All perception at first hand *must* be one-sided. If we wish to widen and, as it were, round off our conception of any personage or transaction of former days, we can only compare and combine the different impressions left by it on different minds, and strive to get at the common facts implied in each; but in so doing we shall either weaken by generalisation the vividness of the whole effect, or if, by the help of a strong, creative imagination, we can discern the organic relation of these various impressions to each other, and work them up into a living whole, we shall bring back again the subjective element in all its force, and superinduce the impress of a new idiosyncrasy on materials drawn in the first instance from the limited apprehensions of individual minds. Nevertheless, such is the natural affinity of the human mind for truth, and such its almost instinctive discernment of it, that we believe a near approach is often made to the original reality in these successive endeavours to grasp it, when a clear and sound understanding works in harmony with a powerful imagination, and both are under the guidance of a high-minded conscientiousness. One thing, however, is quite clear, that, while it is the general object of all history to reproduce the past under one or more of its aspects, diversities

of mental aptitude and temperament, preconceived notions, party bias, facilities for information, exposure to impressions of a particular kind, and in-general the contemporaneous state of manners and opinion, will influence the form and character of its execution, and suggest the reasonableness of trying every historical work by a reference to its implied end, and by its fidelity to the obvious conviction and purpose of the writer. Every form of history, therefore, must be referred to a standard of its own, and estimated from the particular point of mental vision under which it has been conceived.

At the first awakening of a national self-consciousness, there are those who express with credulous simplicity, in verse or the earliest prose that grew out of it, the prevalent belief of their time respecting the men and things of the past, fixing loose and dim reminiscences in the colours of a glowing fancy, and condensing thin and vaporous traditions, ere they entirely evaporate, into the more palpable but still shadowy groundwork of incipient history. Such were the ballad-singers of the heroic achievements of pre-historic Greece and Germany, and the nameless utterers of manifold legends of saintly virtue and missionary enterprise, in the grey dawn of our Christian societies; and then came those who, in the next stage of mental advancement, turned these spontaneous warblings of instinctive poetry—these matins of the rising day of civilisation—into prosaic narrations, with more of the form, but not more of the substance, of hard, objective fact—the *λογοποιοί* of ancient Greece, and the monkish chroniclers of the West. These wild and fanciful productions of a child-like, unquestioning faith have a worth and a beauty, often completely overlooked by the mere *pragmatic* historian, who values nothing but what he calls *fact*, *i.e.* the determination of some very minute condition of time or space or quantity or motion, which may have no moral significance whatever. They are not to be at once cast aside as wilful and impudent fictions written only to deceive. In many cases they are an ingenuous expression of indwelling faith, deeply stamped with the moral lineaments of the age which gave them birth. If they cannot be taken as a reliable guide to the historical realities which they profess to relate, they are nevertheless a sure witness of the contemporaneous state of feeling and belief with respect to those realities, and therefore, indirectly,

through the evidence which they afford of the natural workings of the human mind, a useful measure of historical credibility in other times and under different circumstances. With the growth of intelligence, implicit faith gives way to the desire of personal conviction. Herodotus and Froissart, who represent pretty nearly corresponding phases of social development, collected their materials in extensive journeyings from one ancient temple or one court of chivalry to another, and have left us works which combine with an unspeakable charm the characters of a tour and a history. We have at once presented to us the process and the result; the collector and the historian stand before us in one person. We see history in its growth; and the form which it thus assumes, has a beauty and an interest of its own, which we constantly miss in works more technically perfect. Herodotus betrays already the rise of a more philosophical conception of the subject, in his evident wish to investigate the *causal* relation of events, so fully developed by his illustrious successor, Thucydides. Of the wars between the Greeks and the Barbarians, he proposes to relate *τά τε ἄλλα, καὶ ἐπ' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισιν*.* The most delightful, and on the whole perhaps the most instructive, histories, though for various reasons they can rarely be the most complete, are those which are written by contemporaries. The history of the Peloponnesian War by the distinguished Athenian statesman and general just mentioned, and that of the Great Rebellion by Lord Clarendon, are notable examples. In spite of secret bias or avowed partizanship, there is always a vivid freshness in the description of scenes and the delineation of characters by an eye-witness and associate, and a certain one-sided truthfulness in the conception of events, by one who was actually concerned in them, which never can be attained by those widely separated from the subject of their narration through distance of time and space, and dependence for all their information on dead records and faded traditions. To wish such works more impartial, is to wish away from them the very element which gives them value—that strong, unmistakeable character of individual conviction received under the actual pressure of facts, which conveys to us a portion, at least, of truth, with a force and a distinctness that could not possibly attach to it under any other conditions.

* I. Proem.

When a history embraces the events of a long succession of centuries, and the writer has to weave into a continuous whole, materials of various origin, each dyed with the passions and the prejudices of the particular source from which it is drawn—the interest must arise from the inspiration of some pervading idea, which gives unity to this composition of endless parts, and substitutes the calm delight of patriotic retrospect, or the philosophic comprehension of the grand relations of cause and effect, for the more exciting interest of personal adventure and individual experience. Power of narration, judicious selection of incidents, with skill in grouping them, pictorial talent to call up scenes and characters from the buried past, and place them with a renewed vitality before the mental eye, penetration into the springs of human action, with so much of reflection as sheds light on the transactions which suggest it—and all these talents kept subordinate to one aim, animated and directed by one spirit—such are now the distinguishing merits of the historian, which furnish the criteria of his failure or success. It is the rare combination of these excellences which lends such attractiveness to Livy's majestic narration of the growth of regal and republican Rome, catching in his style something of the grandeur and stateliness of his theme—and to the more philosophic and not less eloquent exposition by Gibbon, of the causes of its imperial decline and fall. In history, when it has reached this highest point of artistic development, the love of picturesque effect must be tempered and kept down by a conscientious respect for ascertained fact, and the single desire of faithful description. The object is not to produce a picture at any cost of evidence or probability, but only such an one as is made up of elements credibly recovered from the abyss of oblivion, and can be accepted as substantially a true image of the past. A caution like this is not without its meaning and its application at the present day. The union of a thorough sifting and testing of materials, with a power of reconstructive combination into living historic forms, is the perfection of this kind of writing, the only art which gives us any command over the ages that are gone.

As we have opened the general subject of historical composition, we may be allowed, perhaps, a very few words on the historical novel. This species of work has its origin in

a restless craving for a more distinct scenic representation of the past, and a more vivid realizing of the personal life of the characters which have figured in it, than is attainable by the legitimate methods of historical reproduction. This desire, it must be confessed, is deeply implanted in the human mind; and so is the wish to penetrate by necromancy into the secrets of the invisible world. But these natural inclinations are to be controlled by considerations of truthfulness and mental health. Because the appetite is strong, it is not therefore to be satisfied with unwholesome food. The interweaving of fact and fiction, like warp and woof, in the texture of the same narrative, has ever seemed to us a vicious combination, when historical personages are placed in the foreground, and made the source and centre of a wide circle of incident, thrown around them by the pure invention of the writer. It confounds impressions of a totally distinct order; gives shadows for realities, and substitutes them as premises, unconsciously assumed in our future reasonings; in one word, it sacrifices respect for truth to the excitement of the imagination. We do not object to the background of a novel being laid in history, with its great immutable outlines dimly sketched in the distance (for this may be necessary to give local and secular colour to the scene), provided the agents and interlocutors, those who really constitute *the* fiction, are only called up from the endless possibilities of ordinary human life, which are buried under the monumental heaps of the past, and no combination of which can have any reflex influence on the everlasting hills and changeless skies of history, age after age stretched over them. Scott's "*Heart of Mid Lothian*" is a beautiful example of fiction laid on broad historical ground, just as an artist might paint a rustic courtship, or any other pastoral subject, with some well-known landscape, crowned by the towers of Windsor or Belvoir, in the distance. But when historical characters, which we have the means of verifying from innumerable extant records, are placed in scenes purely imaginary, and are engaged in conversations for which there is no evidence whatever, which are sheer creations of the author's fancy, as in the "*Woodstock*" and "*Kenilworth*" of the same great author; or when chronological consistency is sacrificed, and persons are placed in impossible relations of time and space to each other, as in Mr. Kingsley's recent

and very brilliant novel of "Hypatia;"—one cannot help feeling, that distinct spheres of mental activity are here unnaturally commingled; that the reproduction of fact is one thing, and the arbitrary creation of its mere image, another; that while fiction is limited in its just range by the confining pressure of immovable fact, the correct apprehension of fact is hindered by the interposition of a false medium, and the accumulation of artificial appendages which hide its true form and proportions.

We anticipate a formidable objection. Immeasurably the greatest of all writers, it will be said, has used history for the subject of his fictions. We allude, of course, to Shakspeare. If the reference be to the old legendary tales and Italian novels which he employed as the material of his plays, the objection carries with it no force; for these were but the crude stuff, the chaotic matter, which he moulded absolutely at will, like clay in the hands of the potter—the mere suggestive thought, the *punctum saliens*, of his own rich and boundless creations; and when these creations came forth, they were at war with no reality worth disputing.* In those of his plays which are founded on the great incidents and characters of Roman and English history, he has accepted and followed the narratives of Plutarch and our native Chroniclers, with as much closeness and unquestioning fidelity as the old Greek dramatists have displayed in their embodiment of the traditionary myths of Troy, and Argos, and Thebes. His object was not, like some of our modern novelists, to blend fact and fiction at will; but, after the fashion of his own day, faithfully to dramatise history as he had received it. In the old editions some of these plays are distinguished from the proper tragedies and comedies, by the significant titles of a "Chronicle History," a "History," a "True Chronicle History," the "Troublesome Reign," or the "Life and Death" of such and such a king; and embrace the principal events and known characters of their

* It is singular, that Shakspeare, the most truly creative of all poets, should, in every instance, have taken some extant *thema* as the basis of his inventions; while the comedies of his contemporary, Ben Jonson, so remarkable for the cold reflectiveness of his genius and his technical pedantry, are pure creations of the fancy, his characters being sometimes little more than the personification of a moral abstraction. His two tragedies on the subjects of Catiline and Sejanus, are, it is true, rigidly historical, long speeches in them being literally translated out of Sallust and Tacitus. His beautiful fragment, the "Sad Shepherd," exhibits a mixed character—poetic fancy working freely on a basis of popular legend.

times.* On the whole, if the distinction between the dramatised chronicles of our great bard, and the historical novel of modern times, should not be deemed so complete as we have attempted to show it is, we do not see why the triumph of his genius over the objections to a form of composition felt on other grounds to be illegitimate, should be taken as a satisfactory disposal of the principle on which those objections are based. The science of history was little understood in those days. Shakspeare adopted what was given him in books, in the largeness of traditional faith; interpreting it by his human sympathies, rather than by the canons of a cautious criticism. All the proprieties of costume and manners he set boldly at defiance; expressing the truth that is in all men, rather than the conventional exterior which invests the individual of a particular country or age. His men and women, whether supposed the contemporaries of Cæsar and Coriolanus, or placed among the ancient Britons, talk the simple, natural language of the citizens of London in the reign of Elizabeth. But history is more deeply studied now. More conditions must unite in its composition to induce us to accept it as a living image of the past. And when the object is not to represent to us what has been, but, by the powerful combinations of a creative fancy, to show us what may be or what ought to be—not merely to paint the manners of a people or a time, but to record the universal workings of the "hidden man of the heart" (and this is the highest function of the novel)—the assumption of an historical basis would demand a reference to so many ascertained facts, and involve the observance of so many and such minute archaeological particulars, to obtain even a moderate degree of historical verisimilitude, as must necessarily inter-

* In Henry IV., V., and VI., Falstaff is the expansion, by the poet's luxuriant creativeness, of an historical germ. In George Steevens's republication of "Twenty of the Plays of Shakspeare, being the whole number printed in 4to. during his Life-time or before the Restoration" (London, 1766), Lear is entitled, a "True Chronicle History of the Life and Death of King Lear," &c.; King John, "The first and second Part of the Troublesome Reigne of John," &c.; Henry IV., "The History of, &c., with the humorous Conceites of Sir John Falstaff;" Henry V., "The Chronicle History of, &c., with his battle fought at Agin Court." In modern editions, we read "The Life and Death" of Richard II. and Richard III. Sometimes the title of "History" is applied to dramas of a different kind, as to "Troilus and Cressida." But, in every case, the idea seems to be that of dramatising some story or legend-already known.

fere with the free working of the imagination, and a truthful delineation of real, living humanity.

But, to return from this digression to the proper subject of the present article: the office of collecting historical materials, and that of writing historical works, have fallen, in modern times, very much into different hands. The Germans and the French more especially, within the last half century, have collected and edited, and are still engaged in editing, with great care and accuracy, the monuments of the history of former ages; and many of their scholars have enriched this field of literature with valuable disquisitions and special monographs on the sources of information concerning particular periods, and their respective titles to authority. These may be compared to mining processes, by which the ore is dug up and exposed to view; its conversion into a state and form available for the purposes of society, must be conducted by workmen of another class, historians properly so called; men who take up the results of foregoing inquiry and re-construct them, and put them into an attractive and intelligible shape.

The learned and accomplished author of the work which we have placed at the head of this article, makes a very proper distinction in his preface, between dissertation and history, between the process and the result.* His object is to exhibit, in a uniform and continuous narrative (the fruit of inquiries previously conducted), the rise, progress, and effects of the papal hierarchy of the West. With great inequalities in the execution of his work (for the style of many passages is slovenly, and even inaccurate), picturesque narration, when he lights on a theme congenial to his taste, and awaken-

* P. iv. It is curious that the Greek word *ιστορία*, which originally signified investigation, came in its later use to designate more particularly and even exclusively the result of investigation; and that not in history alone, but in other fields of human knowledge. In a fragment of Euripides, preserved in Clemens Alexandrinus, and corrected by Valckenaer, it signifies Geometry:—

Ὁλβιος, ὅς τις
Γῆς ἱστορίας ἔσχε μάθησιν, &c.

On which Valckenaer remarks: "Quod posui, docto me spero. Lectori adprobaturum, Γῆς ἱστορίας. In schola quidem Pythagoræ per excellentiam *Geometria* dici potuit *ιστορία*. v. *Jambli.* V. P. § 89. Sed alibi quæcumque quis disciplinam scripto mandaret, illius tradere dicebatur *ιστορίαν*; Musices ex. gr. *Arithmetices*, *Geometriæ*, etc. Eudemī *Γεωμετρικὴν ἱστορίαν* citat Eutocius præfat. Comm. in Archimed. de Dimens. Circuli. P. 49."—L. C. Valckenaer, *Diatribæ* in Eurip. Perditōr. Dramat. Reliquias, c. iv. p. 27.

ing his elegant imagination, is unquestionably his forte. Several of his descriptions possess great vividness and beauty.

Two faculties must combine, the poetic and the philosophic, to constitute an historian of the highest order. He must possess the power of setting a scene distinctly before the mental eye; and he must add to that the still rarer gift of analysing characters and institutions, and of detecting the secret springs of action ever operative as the real causes of phenomena which lie in apparent disorder on the surface of society. One of these endowments alone, if possessed in a superior degree, and conjoined with accuracy and faithfulness, will secure for the historian a lasting fame. No modern writer has displayed the former faculty more strikingly than Mr. Carlyle. He has a wonderful historic eye, intuitively discerning and embracing at once, in their related unity, the minutest fragments of a past reality. Some of the descriptions interspersed through his "Letters and Speeches of Cromwell," have all the freshness and the force of sketches taken on the spot. His battle of Dunbar is an unrivalled piece of historical painting. The writers who occur to us as uniting the descriptive and the philosophical faculty in the highest perfection, are Tacitus and Gibbon, though the character of their minds and their styles is in many respects so very different. Mr. Macaulay combines, in no ordinary degree, philosophic reflection with a power of picturesque narration; but he is less deep and original than Tacitus, and less subtle and acute than Gibbon; and in his descriptions, vivid as they are, we always feel that the rhetorician in some measure overpowers the poet. His battle on Sedgmoor will not bear to be hung up as a pendant to Carlyle's fight at Dunbar. Of English historians distinguished by the philosophic faculty, we should select Mr. Hallam as the most eminent example. He has no particular skill in narration; and rarely attempting description, he still more rarely succeeds. Indeed, his works throughout partake very much of the character of historical disquisition; but for insight into causes, for masterly dissection of the interior nature of men and things, and for a firm tenacious grasp of fundamental principle, Macaulay, Mackintosh, and Hume are certainly his inferiors, and Gibbon himself cannot claim to be more than his equal. In this illustrious group of English historians Dean Milman will hereafter occupy, not

indeed a foremost, but still a respectable place. His reading is vast and varied. Every part of the wide field over which he conducts his reader, he has previously surveyed with his own eye; and to a scholarlike acquaintance with the original sources of knowledge, he has added indefatigable diligence in mastering all that modern research has accomplished for their illustration and enrichment. The whole performance breathes the candid, open spirit of a catholic-hearted christian, and the refined and elevated sentiments of the man of taste and the gentleman. It is honourable to the Church of England to have educated and still cherish in her bosom, the author of such a work. But this history is not remarkable for any great depth of thought or originality of view. We are more struck by the pervading gentleness and moderation of its tone, than by any marked expression of earnestness, or strong individuality of conviction. He glides smoothly and gracefully over the surface of events, without penetrating anywhere to the living heart of things. Doubts that assail, and questions that perplex, the reader, forcing themselves upon him at every turn of the dark, mysterious flow of events delineated in the narrative, the historian leaves unanswered and almost unnoticed. But he has a poet's eye for the beautiful in nature, and for the tender and romantic in human history. He paints the manners well, and is at home in descriptions of scenery. The peculiar qualities of his mind display themselves to great advantage, and his style assumes a freshness and freedom of expression which it often wants on other occasions, when he brings up before his readers the characteristic peculiarities of monastic life, or the hazards and adventures of early missionary enterprise. He has caught with admirable fidelity the spirit of the old chronicles; and the transfusion of their materials into his pages reads quite like the original. We quote the following account of Saint Benedict as a favourable specimen of his mode of narration; and we give it at some length, because we think a connected story will convey a juster impression of the character of the whole work, than a greater number of small insulated extracts.

"Benedict was born at Nursia, in the province of Spoleto, of respectable parents. He was sent to Rome, according to still-prevailing custom, to be instructed in the liberal arts. But his pure

spirit shrunk instinctively from the vices of the capital. He gave up the perilous study of letters, and preferred a holy ignorance.* He fled secretly from the society of his dangerous associates, from the house of his parents, who, it seems, had accompanied him, as of old the father of Horace his son, to Rome.† His faithful nurse alone discovered his design, and accompanied his flight. This incident seems to imply that his flight took place at a very tender age; a circumstance, told at a later period, intimates that it was not before the first impulses of youthful passion. He took refuge in a small village called Effide, about two miles from Subiaco. The rustic inhabitants, pleased with his modesty and sweetness of disposition, allowed him to inhabit a cell near their church. Here took place his first miracle. The faithful nurse, Cyrilla, had borrowed a stone sieve, commonly used in that part of the country to make bread. It fell from her hands, and broke in two. Benedict, moved by her distress, united the two pieces, prayed over them, and the vessel became whole. The wondering rustics are said to have hung the miraculously restored sieve over their church door. But the sensitive youth shrunk from fame, as he had from vice; he sought a deeper solitude. In the neighbourhood of Subiaco, by the advice and assistance of a monk, named Romanus, he found a wild and inaccessible cavern, into which he crept, and for three years the softly and delicately educated boy lay hid in this cold and dismal dwelling from the sight of men. His scanty food was supplied by Romanus, who took it by stealth from his own small pittance in his monastery. The cave was at the foot of the hill on which the monastery stood, but there was no path down the precipitous rock. The food, therefore, was let down by a rope, and a small bell tied to the rope gave notice of its coming. Once the devil broke the rope; but he could not baffle the inventive charity of Romanus. To an imagination so prepared, what scene could be more suited to nurture the disposition to wonders and visions than the wild and romantic region about Subiaco? The cave of Benedict is still shown as a hallowed place, high on the crest of a toppling rock, with the Arno roaring beneath in a deep ravine, clothed with the densest forest, and looking on another wild precipitous crag. Half way up the zigzag and laborious path stands the convent of Benedict's sister, St. Scolastica.‡ So entirely was Benedict cut off from

* "*Scienter nesciens, et sapienter indoctus.*" Such are the words of Gregory the Great.—Dial. i. 2.

† Compare (how strange the comparison!) the life of Horace and the life of St. Benedict.

‡ According to the Annalist of the order, Subiaco, properly Sub-lacu, was a town at the foot of a lake made by the waters of the Arno, which had been dammed up by the Emperor Claudius. On the 20th February, 1325, the lake burst its dam, swept away the road and bridge to San Lorenzo, and left only its

the world that he ceased to mark not merely the progress of ordinary time, but even the fasts and festivals of the Church. A certain priest had prepared for himself some food of unusual delicacy for the festival of Easter. A mysterious admonition within his heart reproved him for this luxurious indulgence, while the servant of God was pining with hunger. Who he was, this holy and heaven-designated servant, or where he dwelt, the priest knew not, but he was led through the tangled thickets and over the rugged rocks to the cave of Benedict. Benedict was ignorant that it was Easter, and not till he was assured that it was that festal day, would he share in the heaven-sent banquet.

"The secret of his hiding-place was thus betrayed, and some of the rude shepherds of the country, seeing the hermit in his coarse attire, which was no more than a sheep-skin thrown round him, mistook him at first for a wild beast; but when they approached him, they were so melted by his gentle eloquence, that their hearts yielded at once, and they were subdued to courtesy of manners and Christian belief. But the young hermit had not escaped the notice or the jealousy of the enemy of mankind. One day (we must not omit peculiarities so characteristic, and this is gravely related by a late serious and learned writer) he appeared in the shape of a black-bird, and flapped him over the eyes with his wings, so as almost to blind him. The evil one took a more dangerous form, the forgotten image of a beautiful woman whom young Benedict had known at Rome (he could not, then, have left it so very young). This was a perilous probation, and it was only by rushing forth and rolling his naked body upon the brambles and sharp points of the rocks, that Benedict obtained the hard-wrung victory. Never after this, as he said to his familiar friends, was he exposed to these fleshly trials. Yet his warfare was not over. He had triumphed over sensual lust, he was to be tempted by religious ambition. A convent of monks in the neighbourhood, excited by the fame of his sanctity, determined to choose Benedict for their head. He fairly warned them of the rigorous and uncompromising discipline which he should think it his duty to enforce. Either fondly believing their own sincerity, or presuming on the latent gentleness of Benedict, they could not be dissuaded from the design. But in a short time the firm severity of the young abbot roused their fierce resentment; hatred succeeded to reverence and love.

"They attempted to poison him; but the cup with the guilty potion burst asunder in the hands of Benedict, who calmly reproved them for their crime, prayed for the divine forgiveness, reminded

dry bed, through which the torrent of the Arno still pours.—Ordin. Benedict. i. c. viii. The old monastery must have been on a peak higher than Benedict's cave.

them of his own warnings before he undertook their government, and withdrew into his happier solitude. It was no longer a solitude. The sanctity of Benedict, and the fame of his miracles, drew together daily fresh aspirants to the holiness or the quietness of his recluse life. In a short time arose in the poetic district, on the peaks and rent clefts, under the oaks and chestnuts round Subiaco, twelve monasteries, each containing twelve votaries (Benedict considered that less or more than this number led to negligence or to discord). The names of many of these cloisters designate their romantic sites: the Monastery of the Cavern, St. Angelo and St. Clement by the Lake, St. John by the Stream, St. Victor at the foot of the Mountain; Eternal Life, or the Holy Valley; and one now called Santa Scolastica, rising amid embowering woods on a far-seen ridge of the Appenines. The fame of these institutions soon spread to Rome. Some of the nobles joined the young fraternities, others sent their sons for the benefit of a severe and religious education; and already considerable endowments in farms and other possessions were bestowed by the piety and gratitude of parents or admirers. Maurus (afterwards St. Maur) was one of these young nobles, who became before long the friend, assistant, and successor of Benedict. To Maurus was soon attributed a share in the miraculous powers, as in the holiness of Benedict. Though wells of water had broken out at the prayer of Benedict on the thirsty summits of the rocks, where the hermitages hung aloft, they were not always at hand or always full. A noble youth of fifteen, Placidus, in drawing water from the lake, fell in, and was carried by the waves far from the shore. Benedict cried to Maurus to assist, Maurus rushed in, and walking on the water, drew out the fainting youth by the hair. A contest of humility began. Maurus attributed the wonder to the holiness of his master; Benedict to the devotion of Maurus. It was decided by the youth, who declared that he had seen the sheepskin cloak of Benedict hovering over him. It would not be difficult to admit all the facts of this miracle, which might be easily accounted for by the excitement of all parties.

"It is strange to see the blackest crimes constantly, as it were, in collision with this high-wrought holiness. Florentius, a neighbouring priest, was envious of the holy Benedict. He attempted to poison him in some bread, which he sent as a present.* Benedict had a prescient consciousness of the treason; and a raven, at his command, flew away with the infected food. Florentius, baffled in

* Compare the attempt of the ambitious Archdeacon to poison the aged Bishop of Canosa. The Bishop drank the cup, having made the sign of the cross, and the *Archdeacon fell dead*, as if the poison had found its way to his stomach.—Greg. Dial. iii. 5.

his design upon the life of the master, plotted against the souls of the disciples. He turned seven naked girls into the garden of one of the monasteries. Benedict determined to withdraw from the dangerous neighbourhood. He had set forth on his journey when Maurus hastily overtook him, and, not without some signs of joy, communicated the tidings of the death of Florentius. The wicked priest had been buried in the ruins of his chamber, which had fallen in, while the rest of the house remained standing. Benedict wept over the fate of his enemy, and imposed penance on his disciple for his unseemly and unchristian rejoicing in the calamity even of the wicked. Benedict pursued his way (as the more poetic legend added, under the guidance of two visible angels) to Monte Casino, about fifty miles from Subiaco. On Monte Casino still arose a temple of Apollo, amid its sacred grove; and in the midst, as it were, of Christianity, the Pagan peasants brought their offerings to their ancient god. But there was no human resistance when the zealous recluse destroyed the profane and stately edifice, broke the idol, overturned the altar, and cut down the grove. Unreluctant, the people received the religion of Christ from the eloquent lips of Benedict. The enemy of mankind attempted some obstruction to the building of the church devoted to Saint Martin. The obstinate stones would not move, but at the prayers of Benedict they fell and crushed the builders, who were healed by his intercession. The last stronghold of Paganism was replaced by a Benedictine monastery, and hence arose that great model republic, which gave its laws to almost the whole of Western Monasticism. If we might imagine the Pagan deity to have any real and conscious being, and to represent the Sun, he might behold the monastic form of Christianity, which rose on the ruins of his ancient worship, almost as universally spread throughout the world, as of old the adoration of his visible majesty."—Vol. I. pp. 415-20.

This work will extend, on its completion, to the fall of the Eastern Empire; and its outward unity of subject, as the History of Latin Christianity, is that of the great temporal power with which the character and fortunes of the Church were so closely interwoven. Dean Milman appears to us to have been more successful in developing the outward unity of the Church, than in penetrating to the interior principle of the Religion. We read in his pages of the visible effects of Christianity; but we nowhere distinctly gather from them, what he conceives to be the *essence* of Christianity—its *specific difference* among many other influences which co-operated along with it. He has so closely bound up the history of Christianity with that of civilisation,

that we are often at a loss to know what is due to each; where it is that Christianity acts on civilisation, or civilisation on Christianity. This vague apprehension of the subject-matter is a great defect in a work professedly treating of the effects of Christianity on the condition of the world. But our author shares the blame in common with other writers of high philosophical pretensions, whose works, with many excellences, and many partial glimpses of the divinest truth, do not give us the impression of having gone to the bottom of the subject, but leave the mind in a questioning and unsatisfied condition. They are open to the charge of arbitrarily claiming all the good that has been wrought in the world, for Christianity, and of casting the responsibility of innumerable accompanying evils, on its associated and merely human agencies. This is a point to which, we think, more attention ought to be directed, and in discussing which, a more exact discrimination of commingling elements should be exercised. We have not left ourselves enough of time and space on the present occasion to go into a question of this extent. It is one of sufficient interest and importance to demand a separate article to itself. We can now do no more than just indicate the quarters in which we think its solution is to be sought. Our object is to find out the secret of the unparalleled, and as yet unexhausted, spiritual influence of Christianity; on what principle of our own nature, or of the divine economy of things, its transforming influence on the heart and life of man is to be explained. The following answers to this inquiry have suggested themselves to our mind; if they possess any justness, they will indicate, at least proximately, what it is that *essentially* constitutes Christianity:—(1.) A belief that the one absolute and sovereign Deity, in whom all power and blessing dwell, has broken through the physical barriers standing between himself and his creation, and by his spirit or word (for the two terms were originally convertible, implying a revelation of primal or fundamental truth), manifested in all its fulness through a pure human soul and a holy, loving, self-sacrificing human life, has opened a direct intercourse with his human family on earth; (2) that Christ, as a complete type of human religiousness, an exemplification in his own life and death, of the moral relationship that should ever subsist between the human and the sovereign mind, is

a spiritual Mediator between God and man; (3) that men, by self-subjection and self-surrender to the divine spirit which the life and doctrine of Christ, contemplated in faith, and interpreted by the light of reason and conscience, excite and cherish in the soul—enter into spiritual communion with Christ, and through Christ with God; and that this spiritual communion with Christ and God is the end and consummation of a religious life; (4) that by this union of will, heart, and endeavour with God, men ally themselves with that which is imperishable and everlasting, have their life in God himself, break the power of sin, disarm death, and are able to co-operate freely and joyfully in the divine harmony of the Universe.

We are not now, it should be remembered, discussing philosophical principles, and asking whether the foregoing propositions are adequate exponents of them; but simply analysing broad, overt, unquestionable historical facts, and endeavouring to detect the mental elements which are latent in them. Underneath an enormous accumulation of doctrinal formulas which have hidden or disguised them, we believe that the convictions and trusts essentially expressed by these propositions, will ever be found through all ages of the Church, secretly but powerfully at work; and that in them has ever resided the *essence*, the *vitality*, of the Christian faith. Going yet a step farther back, and tracing up these convictions and trusts to the one historical fact which originally stimulated them into vivid consciousness, we arrive at the mysterious personality of Jesus Christ—when we first look upon it in the uncorrupted simplicity of its genuine impression on the mind, distinguished only by its superhuman sweetness and sanctity, and by its extraordinary spiritual influence on crushed and sorrowing souls—but when viewed, after a longer contemplation, in connection with the vast world-changes which prepared for it, which followed it, and which are still in progress, most evidently the vehicle and instrument of a mightier agency and a more commanding foresight than have their origin and issue in the limited faculties of man. That effects so deep and searching, and a revelation so complete, should have been introduced by a process so apparently simple as the exhibition to mankind of a life of genuine goodness, of a soul unreservedly devoted to God,—is an indication of the

source to which we must look for any future moral renovation of the human family, and gives us ground to hope, that in the same degree that we can bring again into the world the true virtue and pure religiousness of Christ, we shall win back a proportionate confidence from the morally darkened and lost, and produce a corresponding development of the moral elements of society. It must indeed be admitted that the influence of Christ's doctrine and life was aided and strengthened by beliefs and agencies of a different origin, which worked along with it in the world, and without which it could never have been what it was. On the other hand, when it is objected, that we do not know what Christ's life really was, but only what his contemporaries and successors believed respecting it, and that we may, therefore, be honouring an unreality; it is surely competent to reply, that the clear, emphatic witness of those who saw him and heard him, expressed in language at once so simple and so fervent, evidently an unforced and natural utterance of the heart—is itself a phenomenon which remains inexplicable, apart from the presence of a reality grand and beautiful enough to call it forth; and that it is far less difficult to admit the partial elevation and enlightenment of simple, ignorant natures under the commanding influence of a great soul like that of Christ, than to concede the possibility of the creation by such natures of a moral ideal, so unique and self-consistent throughout, and so far transcending the evident capacity of their unassisted thought. Assuming the existence of a Christ, we can easily understand how a Church might gather round the memory of his virtues and the tradition of his instructions; but Strauss's theory we cannot comprehend—how such a community as that of the earliest Hebrew converts must certainly have been, could by any contribution of their respective spiritual faculties, even when exalted to the utmost by the inspiring influence of their ancient Scriptures, have made up among them the idea of the Christ of the New Testament.

The essential elements of Christian belief, under various forms, run through and connect together in one organic whole, the diversified phases of its manifold history, and are the hidden source and inspiration of those beautiful and striking displays of Christian self-sacrifice and heroism, which stand out to view here and there, as witnesses of what the

Church ought to be, and as protests against what it too generally has been and still is. These elements develop themselves and bear their fruit, sometimes through antagonism, and sometimes through sympathy and co-operation, with the other agents of civilisation; and it requires a thoughtful, observant mind, fully possessed by the idea of what Christianity is, to discern their presence and trace their workings amidst the wild strife of human passion and selfishness, and the thick darkness of beclouded intellect and extinguished science. In the reaction from the mischievous superstition which has so often gathered round Christian doctrines and encrusted Christian institutions, the spiritual element involved in them has constantly been overlooked or disowned; and the mind has thrown itself on a dry, bare rationalism, accepting only what it could logically prove, and for a time, perhaps, taking refuge in atheistic materialism. The only protection against these alternate excesses of superstition and infidelity, is to be found in cherishing that direct, habitual intercourse of the inmost soul with God, through which it comes under the action of his spirit,—the very same spirit which dwelt in all its fulness in Christ, which, by a secret sympathy, connects us with him in his invisible state, and which constitutes the living unity of his Church, the true communion of saints, through every age. To check the vagueness of this general influence, and keep it within the limits of moral beauty and spiritual health, the life of Christ, recorded just as it fell on the simple apprehensions, or was preserved in the grateful remembrances, of his followers, is set up in an imperishable form in the New Testament, as a normal, corrective type of human religiousness. That recorded life and the present wants of the human soul interpret each other. The former would be a dead image of the past, but for the human sympathies which it excites, and which are breathed back into it, and make it live again; the latter might often urge our weakness into folly and extravagance, but for the soft and silent influence, the almost unconscious control, which that lovely ideal exercises over us.

We know how utterly impossible it is to demonstrate these things to minds which are not, from some peculiarity of temperament or outward influence, conscious of that deep spiritual want in which to us they find the sure evidence of a divine appointment. Nevertheless, we might ask even such

minds to cast a candid glance over the history of the last two thousand years, and say what it would have been without the presence of those spiritual elements which compose the essence of Christianity; granting to the full the enormity of the crimes and the cruelties of which they have been made the pretext, or even been the direct occasion. It is a practical question which we constantly put to ourselves, and to which we think every earnest, thoughtful man is bound to find some answer; withdraw Christianity, even in its present low and impure state, from our actual world, and what can you put in its place? And if you can find nothing, how are the mass of men to proceed without an equivalent? Our object should be unceasingly to evolve the spiritual principles, transmitted in scriptural dogmas and ecclesiastical forms, into a condition of greater purity and more vital accordance with the highest demands of our moral and intellectual nature. But the task of asserting and defending Christianity at the present day, is one of peculiar difficulty. We are as much embarrassed by its professed friends as its avowed enemies. It is not easy, according to the prevalent conceptions of the subject, to reconcile what a thoroughly honest criticism compels us to admit, with the requirements of an earnest and positive faith. Facts are not to be gainsaid. It is no use shutting our eyes to them, and saying they are not. The dread of truth is the surest sign of the absence of faith. Yet facts which are indisputable, point to conclusions fatal to grounds on which some people choose exclusively to build their faith. For ourselves we have no fear of the worst of any honest criticism. We are convinced, that there are ascertained and immovable limits of fact in history, beyond which its ravages cannot proceed; and within those limits we are completely indifferent as to any result which criticism may establish, because, be it what it may, while history continues history, and the human soul preserves its identity, that result cannot touch the basis on which our trust in God and our reverence for the prophetic character of Christ are founded. But, unfortunately, numbers will not adopt this view; and to us Christianity, for the present at least, seems seriously imperilled by the position which they are pleased to take. They are startled and alarmed at criticism, though wholly unable to deny what it asserts. They will cling to ground which has been shown to be insecure, instead of adopting a

religious philosophy based in human nature, and in harmony with all the facts of history, which would set them at ease, and place their faith beyond the reach of any scientific assault. The immediate issue it is impossible to foresee. There is a mighty ferment in the spirits of men. Every one must be true to himself; doing the work which God offers to his hand, and speaking the word which God puts into his mouth. He may not be understood by honest and virtuous men, and he may witness no visible success attend the truth to which he has devoted the best energies of his being. But he must persevere. God's Spirit is working out its own way in the storm and the strife. It is better to fall in the imperishable cause of truth, than share in the transitory victories of falsehood.

ART. II.—REGENERATION.

Regeneration. By Edmund H. Sears. Printed for the American Unitarian Association. Boston: Crosby, Nichols and Co., 111, Washington Street. 1853.

THIS is an eloquent book, written with such impulse and ease as to render it at least very readable, if it were nothing more. But we think it has much in it that may really render it worth perusal; and even where we disagree with the author in opinion, we still feel ourselves in sympathy with his spirit and aim. He divides his book into three parts. In the first he treats of "the natural man," in the second of "the spiritual nature," and in the third of "the new man." In his introduction the author states the three theories that may be held respecting the nature of man. The first, that of the Westminster divines—a theory of total corruption inherited from Adam, "defiling all the faculties and parts of the soul and body." This Mr. Sears (as might be expected) discards, and in a few words. The next that he cites is one so commonly held, by Unitarians especially, that it may be worth while to quote the passage in which he refers to it.

"There is another view which may be briefly stated thus. Men, as they now come into the world, are in the same moral state in which the first man was created. His sin affected no one but himself; and human nature is not changed by the fall. The farther we trace the stream of life towards its beginning, the purer we find it, and with every one it is perfectly pure at the period of infancy. Man's true culture, then, is the development of his powers from within outward, under such external aids as this probation affords. What is corrupt comes to him from without, from wrong education, from vicious example, from the influence of a bad state of society. He starts in life entirely disconnected with the past, and has only to choose the good or the evil that is offered him.

"This theory of man which 'cuts the thread of history from behind us every hour,' is here stated very nearly as it came from the lips of its reputed framer,* and with some modifications and additions it has maintained its integrity for ages in the progress of

* See the account of the System of Pelagius, "Murdock's Mosheim," Vol. I., p. 371.

human opinion. Its history has run nearly parallel with that of the doctrine first described, perhaps sometimes borrowing from it a darker tinge than its own, or a clothing from its mystic phraseology. May we suggest that it is a survey of human nature only upon the surface, without sounding its mystic and troubled deep? Hence those who adopt it so often recede from it as the mysteries that lie within successively reveal themselves. Hence a church formed around this as one of its central principles will seldom retain that class of minds whose habits of thought are ascetic or introspective, or whose deep and surging sensibilities demand some potent voice to guide and to soothe them, some light to explain their dark and terrible on-goings. Its recruits come from the side of the world; not from those who had before left it, and are passing on to the deeper experiences.

"The first theory so merges the individual in the species, that he is there lost and buried in one solid and gloomy mass of corruption, and the sin of one man was the sin of all. By the last it is resolved back into that extreme individualism which admits of no unitary life, but makes it exist in fragments or in endless and independent atoms. Does this last meet the facts of history, of consciousness, of revealed truth, better than the other? Does it meet the demands that come up from the profounder depths of human nature itself? We shall see, while having done with the negative side of the question we now advance to the positive."—Pp. 16, 17.

Mr. Sears then draws the natural distinction between hereditary guilt or depravity, and hereditary tendencies to sin, or, as he calls them, (and we wish sometimes, as the reader may have done in the above extract, that one or two of his words were more simple and natural,) *proclivities* to evil, and lays down this postulate.

"Transmissive dispositions and proclivities to evil, coming down along a line of tainted ancestry, and gathering strength and volume on their way by every generation that transmits them, is a fact that is universal, and so an irreversible law of human descent."—P. 19.

Now, though there is truth in this statement, Mr. Sears has omitted a converse statement equally true. As certainly as sinful tendencies inherited and *yielded to* will gather strength in each case of indulgence, and if indulged in one generation will prove stronger in the next, and less easily resistible by the same amount of voluntary effort, so certainly may this process be reversed, and tendencies inherited, but carefully *checked* in one generation, will be *feebler* in the next, and more easily resistible by the same amount of will.

So that there is no certain truth in the assertion that evil tendencies "gather strength and volume on their way by every generation that transmits them."

The truth to which Mr. Sears draws attention illustrates itself continually as noble names pass from the notice of the world, and gradually lose, first fame, and then reputation, till perhaps they become a by-word for pity or contempt. But were this the *only* fact of the matter, we could scarcely ever see men rise into the light of esteem and honour,—not as men of genius, of these we are not speaking—but as men of high moral dignity and elevation of character. Will it be said that these do *not* receive or transmit the evil tendencies referred to? We apprehend not. Our author himself speaks of these perverted dispositions as a latent inheritance, and the birthright of every man, even where not in activity, and as thus *reappearing* occasionally after three or four generations, in some unhappily weak or self-willed descendant. The above postulate, therefore, as a general law is not true. It would, if true, necessarily involve the rapid growth of evil, and thus the increasing degeneracy of the race. Regeneration would only check it in the individual, while in the race it would still go on contracting new force, and make such a check less and less possible continually. We can hardly think this is the author's meaning. His view of regeneration and newness of life seems to forbid it; but then he has too loosely worded his proposition. Had he said that evil tendencies and dispositions, coming down along a line of tainted ancestry, and gathering or losing strength and volume on their way, in proportion as each successive generation surrenders itself to their influence, or checks and suppresses their activity and growth, are realities of universal experience, and belong to an irreversible law of human descent, we think no one could have objected to the postulate. And just in so far as it is a truth too often overlooked, are we grateful to have our attention drawn to it. We believe, too, that this statement would express Mr. Sears' own view, if it may be gathered rather from the general tendency of his thoughts and views, than from any particular passage or expression. But his language, for the most part, seems more in conformity with his own broad and one-sided proposition. He could scarcely plead, in defence of his proposition, that the virtues of men, inherited by descent, gather strength and

volume also; and that this fact would prevent the increasing degeneracy of the race, for in that case each generation would be left in the same moral equilibrium with its predecessor; and there would be no room for those constant changes always going on in the moral life of society. Besides, this would involve a constant enlargement of the whole dimensions and force of moral life, of which there does not appear to be any trace. It is because good and evil grow *in the race*, each in proportion as they are cherished *in the individual*, that here is a rise and there is a fall in moral and spiritual excellence in the various families and nations of the earth, just as the free will of man is exerted for good or for evil. And though both good and evil tendencies are doubtless transmitted from generation to generation, it cannot be said that either, as a certain fact and general law, gathers strength and volume on its way. This will vary with the varying character.

From all such expressions, therefore, as that "hatreds descend from parent to child, *increasing in rancour on their way*," we must express a decided dissent. The value of this part of the work, however, we look upon as unquestionable. The pith of the matter lies in the sentence "all violations of the divine laws, as they pervade our entire constitution, tend not only to individual ruin, but *the degradation of species*." (P. 25.) We will here quote a passage illustrative of Mr. Sears' argument and style.

"We must not look exclusively at the individual virtues that bloom out among every people. We must survey human nature through its grand organisations, and accept the fact that evil and wrong are not functional, but organic also. And we must also remember that we are surveying a race of which we ourselves are members, and that our judgment is exposed to the sway of its corruptions. Could we rise out of it and survey it from a point outside; could we look down upon it with an angel's eye, from some mild-beaming and sinless planet, and take into one view the bloody march of its history, though we might not say with Mr. Burke, that this earth is the 'bedlam of the solar system,' we should certainly allow that it lay in wickedness, and that we surveyed the moral ruins of an apostate world.

"Passing on to a view not quite so general, we come to the fact that the human species fall into divisions of races, and that each race has its own peculiar life and type of character descending through innumerable generations. Time, culture, and

physical environments exert their plastic power within a certain range; but during three or four generations, and, indeed, during any known historical periods, *they never break up the type*. The origin of races is a question from which we retire. It is all the same, as regards this argument, whether the streams of migration first radiated from one or from many centres. We simply point to the fact, that each bears along its own qualities and colourings, which do not disappear through series of ages; that they become more distinctive in their divergence, and cut their channels deeper as they flow. The African is torn from his native groves, and driven through every variety of clime and fortune, but his ancestral life he never loses. The cold of Canadian hills does not freeze it up. The fire of tropical suns does not melt it out of him. The Jew floats on for ever an element in the world's population, which all its attritions cannot break in pieces, nor its fiercest surges dissolve. Let art and civilisation cover up this ancestral life under fairer forms and shows; let time file away its rougher features as man emerges out of barbarism, and then let the old temptations encircle him anew, and the old spirit will sweep through him and re-appear.

"Refinement of manners and national comity will give way before it like threads of gossamer. A desire for his neighbour's land was the unappeasable greed of the Anglo-Saxon and his cognate tribes, emerging grimly out of the Cimbric forests, and pouring successive waves of conquest over England. After the lapse of a thousand years, its motions are beating over the Mexican and the Sikh, in a resurgent wave of the same barbarism."—Pp. 20-22.

We think this is true; but that it discountenances the theory of the writer. Surely the Anglo-Saxon passion has not been "gathering volume and strength" in the western hemisphere since the migration of the pilgrim fathers, and still less in this island ever since the Norman Conquest! Another item not to be lost sight of in the deepening and individualising process of national development, is the *intellectual* one. Mr. Sears is dealing with *moral* subjects; and moral elements there certainly are transmitted by every race and generation, contributing their share to mould and stereotype national character. But these are not all; and in regard to the African and the Jew, as well as the Anglo-Saxon, we must take more fully into account those mental and also physical characteristics which are transmitted by a more simple law of transmission than that which regulates the heritage of *moral* features, subject as these are to the modification of individual freedom. If national character as a

whole becomes more strongly marked as time moves on, (which we question,) it does not therefore necessarily follow that its *moral* or *immoral* tendencies increase with each transmission of them. There are influences at work—climate and soil and the necessary arts of life—which modify the type through the physical and intellectual man; and the higher influences of special minds, such as arise from time to time,—the great luminaries of science, art, or literature; the gifted men of the century or of all centuries, will be influences that *may* so operate upon the society of the country, as to fix or intensify its national peculiarities through the intellectual, not through the moral man. But, further, it may well be asked whether national character, especially in its moral phases—though it grows more distinct and vivid up to a certain date, when its power or its national function culminates in strength and greatness—does not as surely become again feebler and less separated from the other types around, either when its inner and its popular life droops from internal weakness, or when, by a more constant association with other races, its individuality becomes affected and worn down. Doubtless, up to a certain, or rather to an uncertain but still finite limit, it is quite true that in every phase of their life, nations “become more distinctive in their divergence, and cut their channels deeper as they flow.” But this national growth appears to have its limits. It is with nations as with men. During the early development of character in a family, the personal features of each individual child emerge into observation, and show a clearer phase of individuality, as the child expands into the mature man or woman. But after youth is entirely passed, there is “no cutting of a deeper channel of distinctiveness” by the calm and quiet man, whose purposes are no longer so keen, and whose buoyancy of hope and vigour is gone by. And while, in like manner, the growth of a nation is still going on, it does, no doubt, diverge from its surrounding neighbours, and pursue a more and more definite line of its own. But this time also passes by; great changes pass over the continents of the earth, and seem to bear on the greatness and the glory of one race, to fill and expand the life of another. We much doubt whether there was not a far more Anglo-Saxon individuality of character in the Englishman of Chaucer’s, or even of Shakspeare’s day, than among our own contemporaries. In a growing or just

grown race, all the strong elements of character, both its heroisms and barbarisms, seem to be dominant, in full and forcible activity. But then, the culminating point being passed, partly from internal social weakness, and partly from the general mingling of races brought about by the increasing commerce of nations, and partly from the tempering effect of intellectual culture, the strong features of national character are softened down, their lines blurred, and the deep marks of early development are to be found only in the pages of history, as we ponder them in solitude; in the world they are almost lost. Here then is another limit to what we may call Mr. Sears' moral theory of accelerating velocity.

It is not true that "evil spiritual forces," as a general rule, "come down from the past with cumulative strength." In the first place, with regard to individual families and generations, because it seems preposterous to suppose that either evil or good gains force by descent, *per se*, and not rather in proportion to the activity with which it is voluntarily cherished or checked by each individual man and generation; and secondly, in the case of national types of character, we cannot always trace their increasingly distinctive features to *moral* causes; nor are we disposed to believe that, beyond a certain limit, national character does acquire more marked and definite traits, moral or unmoral.

The following passage will show, better than we could explain, the anti-Pelagian view of human nature in its present condition, which this writer adopts.

"We suppose that, if Pelagius were to rise from his repose, he might bring an objection somewhat on this wise. The facts which have now been stated, do not prove any innate depravation of human nature. All its propensities are in themselves good. They only become depraved through voluntary perversion and abuse. The senses are all good, and even the animal appetites and passions. Things, in themselves good, may be used either for good or evil purposes. Appetite is for self-preservation; desire for property is to excite industry; combativeness, to defend the right; reason, to investigate truth; and reverence, to worship God. If, in their perversion, they produce licentiousness, avarice, murder, sophistry, and superstition, the fault lies in the use and not in the possession, and so all that is in man is originally good and pure.

"If the traveller, musing amid the splendid ruins of Palmyra, should see in the broken entablatures, and tottering porticoes, and

columns half-buried in rubbish and sand, the city of the desert queen in its primitive glory, his imagination, we suppose, would be deemed somewhat fertile and illusive. All that he sees in itself is good and beautiful, and once formed structures through whose halls passed a train of joyous beings, or around whose domestic altars clustered the virtues and charities. All the parts of those structures may be there still, but not with their original *adaptations and symmetries*, and that makes all the difference between a city in its splendour and a city in its ruins.

"Man loses none of his faculties in the process of his deterioration, but he does lose their original symmetry and harmony. There is a certain relation between sense and reason, and affection, which makes man's mind the fresh print and copy of the Creator's. There is that distortion, or complete *inversion* which makes it the image of the demon's. Sense may serve the reason, or reason may be the subject of sense. Affection may be placed supremely on God or on self. The faculties may be toned and harmonised, and made in heavenly order, giving a sense of that wholeness and complete unity which exist in the Divine nature. This unity may be broken up, and hence there may arise the sense of inward conflict, as if nature by some dire convulsion were riven asunder. Human nature to be transmitted in its purity, must be transmitted not only with all its original powers, but in its divine proportions and harmonies. If it comes with the sensuous powers developed into monstrous and morbid action, and the reason shorn of its brightness, it is a nature darkened and distorted, and therefore depraved."—P. 29-31.

Mr. Sears then traces the growth of acquired instincts, and passes on to treat of "the testimony of consciousness" to this inheritance of evil dispositions. This is the most important part of his argument, and we shall, therefore, again let him speak for himself. He takes for one of the mottoes to this chapter, St. Paul's saying, (Rom. vii. 17,) "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

"There is a large class of minds, ranging through all nations, sects, and ages, which, though differing in their theologies, have a singular agreement as to the facts of consciousness. They draw various conclusions from these facts, but they bear uniform testimony as to the facts themselves. The testimony is substantially this, that some evil forces within, lying deeper than their personal volitions, or acquired tastes, and antedating all their culture and habits, are seeking to possess and to sway their faculties. They give to the individual the feeling of divided consciousness. And this feeling is stronger just in the degree that the religious experience becomes more deep and vital. The more the interior man is

searched and laid open by the word of God, the clearer are the demonstrations of this divided consciousness; and it seems to the individual that two classes of powers are ranged in opposition, and seeking for the dominion of his nature. This conflict, perhaps, did not appear except under the light of Christian truth bursting on the soul in clearer splendour, like the sun rising on a field where hosts are gathered and arrayed for battle, but which lay in stillness on their arms until the morning light should appear. Those who live a life merely natural, and outwardly blameless, yet who have never brought the most interior life under the judgments of the eternal law, have no such experience as we here describe. But it is conspicuously displayed in the lives of such men as Luther, Fenelon, Taylor, Bunyan, Fox, Edwards, and Ware, and the more so as the interior nature emerged out of dim twilight into open day, where all things appeared, not *in mass*, but *distributed*, and with their shape and quality confessed."—P. 36, 37.

Now we think the existence, here maintained, of two natures in man, of an inherited bias of family or race to certain kinds of evil, coupled in the same individual with a personal moral soul, a sense of responsibility, and an aim at higher holiness and a purer peace, is true and important.

We have elsewhere* noticed "the immense practical excess of strength of the lower class of desires over the higher, the great odds against which the human will has to take up the fight of duty;" and of course this *may* be the result of *hereditary* evil. May we not believe that it was not so in the beginning of the world? and that the Hebrew traditions of intercourse with God, as of Enoch, Noah, &c., are the imperfect chronicles of an early and primitive purity, too soon lost from the race, which gradually, and only gradually, deteriorated? We have thrown out one suggestion on the all-troubled question of evil, in sympathy with Mr. Maurice, we here present another and different one from the pages of Mr. Sears. To many minds this latter may seem the more probable and tenable theory perhaps. Men's temptations usually seem to come rather from *within* than from *without*; as if the old notion of the inherent resistance and unmanageableness of matter resided as evil in the flesh itself. And on this ground does this view of the subject seem important. Temptation to evil seeming so often to come distinctly from within, the tendency of all weak and self-indulgent natures

* See Prospective Review for November, 1853, p. 575.

will be to excuse themselves for yielding to their evil propensities, on the ground that the inclinations operating within them are part of themselves, and of the nature given to them by constitution, and therefore by God. If we adopt the theory that our temptations (the stronger ones at least, and those apparently least natural to us), are given from *without* by Satan or evil spirits, we may still be apt, perhaps, in our weakness and perversity, to visit upon our Creator the origin of such temptations; and to inquire why He permits us to be so beset. If we adopt the other theory expounded by Mr. Sears, we then believe that these evil inclinations are in large part the result of our abnormal condition; that God made man pure and holy; that sin is of strictly human origin, and has from the first derived both its birth and growth from the faithless will of man. Our family honour and patriotic feeling is thus in some way enlisted on the side of conscience, to deter us from showing what abnormal condition, the misguided impulses or wilful self-indulgences of our forefathers and countrymen have begotten in us. We cannot, on this theory, visit our temptations upon God, or upon any extraneous agencies by Him suffered to torment us; they recoil upon ourselves and our ancestors; these have handed down to us their peculiarities. To weaknesses which they might have controlled they suffered themselves to become captives, and have thus infected our natures with their infirmities; their sins are working in us when we yearn to sin; through the fall of our predecessors we fall again. "This sea of being, out of which we rise like bubbles out of some mighty deep, has its under-tides and currents, whose force and swell break into our consciousness; and we tremble with their motions, and struggle against the downward rush of the waves." All is not now as it once was. When man first issued from the great forming hand, his spirit was clear, and his instincts unperverted. As Mr. Arnold says:—

"Who can see the green Earth any more,
As she was by the sources of Time?
Who imagines her fields as they lay
In the sunshine, unworn by the plough?
Who thinks as they thought,
The tribes who then liv'd on her breast,
Her vigorous primitive sons?"

What girl
 Now reads in her bosom as clear
 As Rebekah read, when she sate
 At eve by the palm-shaded well?
 Who guards in her breast,
 As deep, as pellucid a spring
 Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure?

What Bard,
 At the height of his vision, can deem
 Of God, of the world, of the soul,
 With a plainness as near,
 As flashing as Moses felt,
 When he lay in the night by his flock
 On the starlit Arabian waste?
 Can rise and obey
 The beck of the spirit like him?"

We cannot dogmatise on these points; but this theory of inherited dispositions to sin is more than a theory; it is largely verified by fact. More than any other, it may appear, to some minds at any rate, to vindicate the character of God. He has not left us thus a prey to evil spirits, but, by a most just irreversible moral law, "He visits the sins of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation." What can be more natural, what should seem more inevitable, than that the tendencies of men, both to good and evil, should be, like physical and mental peculiarities, derived from ancestors, and transmitted to descendants? If consumption, and insanity, and idiocy may be transmitted, often so regularly, through various generations, why not also moral tendencies, the bias towards certain virtues and vices; a bias proportionate in each case to the foregoing strength of the virtue or the vice; proportionate to the effort made to reduce a transient impulse into a fixed habit, or to smother and extinguish it entirely? It is obviously no sufficient objection that we do not see these tendencies in the pure and guileless child. All that the most absurd sentimentalist can say about the charms of infancy will only establish its *innocence*; that is, the absence of positive sin. The nature is still in the germ; the instincts and dispositions are simply undeveloped. You certainly would not guess at its future when looking upon the smiling child rocked in its cradle, or borne in its mother's arms; and

yet day after day unfolds some little trait of character, and often (without any provocation or any possibility of temptation to one so young) some perverse or faulty disposition also. The parental or ancestral nature is already there. In advancing with his argument Mr. Sears endeavours to prove this law of descent beneficent. He shows that there would be no unity in races and nations without such a moral tie (in addition to the physical one), uniting together the past and the present and the future in human history. He may possibly run his inferences too far, but we think in the main that his view is correct, and that such a law is necessary to the continuity of the race. He says,—what is almost self-evident indeed:—

“Let every man come into being with the thread of history cut from behind him, commencing an existence original and *de novo*, without the peculiar loves and aptitudes of his ancestry or his tribe, and society at once is resolved into a wretched individualism, with which all progress must stop for ever; and all the accumulations of past wisdom and experience must be lost in a hopeless and endless chaos.”—P. 61.

“The law of descent is an ever-recurring security that society shall not be subject to violent and destructive changes. Like the individual, its improvement and renovation shall not break up the continuity of its being. Even if it be on a course of deterioration, it shall decline and be dissolved with the least possible of individual suffering and ruin. But let that law cease by which generation is linked to generation, without which there is no hearty love and reverence of ancestry, without which the fathers cannot live in the future, nor the children in the past, and society, if it could exist at all, would be always in a whirl of revolution. Every reform would be a destruction and a recreation out of ruin, if, indeed, there could be enough of elective affinity among the chaotic atoms for any reconstruction to become possible. Every important change would be, by dissolving the fabric into ‘the dust and powder of individuality.’”—P. 62.

On this part of the subject it is needless, perhaps, to dwell any longer. We will only add that it appears to us a consideration continually overlooked in this age of isolated self-will. Men think of their actions as having a solely special and confined influence, or at most as only operative socially within the very narrow range of personal association. They do not appear to recognise the very simple fact, often conceded, though not often so thoroughly dealt with as in the

work before us, that in the formation of personal character an after-generation is concerned; that selfishness, and sloth, and vice, and hatred, and all the evil passions, are not only mischievous in themselves to the individual, but, by every indulgence, root themselves more deeply in the character, and reveal their hideous features again in souls yet unborn, long after the deep silence of the last sleep has settled on the erring and guilty predecessor. The world after us has a personal and earnest interest in our excellence and fidelity, and there could not be a simpler and truer patriotism than that which consults for future generations, through its personal and social reforms in the present.

In the second part of his treatise, in dealing with the spiritual nature, Mr. Sears speaks of it plainly as common to all men. "There is no mind," he says, "into which hath not dawned the great idea of right and wrong; and that quivering sense of justice in all men, which they call conscience, and which the apostle says made the heathen a law unto themselves, is formed by the gentle and never-ceasing undulations of the Holy Spirit through the heart." He recognises the same heavenly influence in the soul of the Pagan, as in that of the Christian. Perhaps our author's notion here is a little too much like the vague idea of a general and universal inspiration, held by his fellow-countryman, Mr. Parker; widely as their opinions appear to differ on questions more nearly touching Christianity. For, though he immediately proceeds to restrict the term Holy Spirit or Comforter to a more special sense, only applicable within the pale of Christianity, still his notion of Gentile or Pagan virtue, or any virtue not Christian—and not of virtue only, but of "God-like sentiment, and ideas of God, and immortality, and the divine law"—is that these are all the immediate gifts or breathings of the Divine Spirit. Now is it not an act of pantheism, spiritual, doubtless, but still pantheism, the identifying our higher natures so entirely with the mind of the all-sustaining God, as to suppose that nothing good can possibly possess it, save as the immediate influx of goodness from the all-perfect One? It is quite another thing to admit, or insist upon the fact, that there can be and is communion between the divine and the human mind. The notion that the body should be cared for by an omnipotent will, but the soul abandoned by an infinitely righteous

Spirit, seems simply destructive of all earnest and vital religion. But if the free actions of the faithful will are not to be looked upon as the deeds of God, is it not equally reasonable to suppose that the soul may be itself a centre of spiritual life, sustained indeed, nurtured, fed, strengthened by God, and expanding only through his help into nobler and fuller proportions of excellent power; and yet so made and endowed by the primitive fiat of Heaven, as to have in itself holy desires, noble sentiments, pure instincts, and lofty aspirations? If we do wrong to think of all matter as the extended substance of Deity, do we not err somewhat in the same way in treating all mind as but the free passage of eternal thought? Is it merely what Mr. Sears names it, "an organism for the reception of light and life in perennial streams from the eternal Fountain?" His further declaration "that man has the power of *originating* truth and goodness, is one of the illusions of his own pride," is, perhaps, strictly true; but may it not be possible that man may conceive of goodness, and wish for it, and love it, without those pure conceptions, wishes, or affections being merely the transmitted inspirations of the Deity? Yet that they are nothing more, would rather seem to be Mr. Sears', as well as, very evidently, Mr. Parker's view. It appears to us to savour of pantheism. Surely prayer, for example, is more natural and intelligible as the free effort of a devout nature, of itself seeking and loving God, than as the holy thought of the Father (intent upon drawing His child towards Him), descending upon the soul of man, and lifting it up to Himself? This twofold action is less reconcileable, as it appears to us, both with true philosophy and individual experience. It is one of the signs, perhaps, of the pantheistic tendencies of the age, as well as of a lively re-action from the cold utilitarian views of half a century back, that devout men are so apt now-a-days to refer their *entire* experience, so far as it is pure and holy, to the Eternal; while they condemn themselves, through free will, to bear the onus of every evil thought, feeling, and act.

That conscience, that the sense of obligation to act in accordance with a certain law of right, in short, the sense of duty, is the immediate teaching of God, we cannot doubt; and that, among the many suggestions of good and evil arising from within, He urges upon us the claims of the

highest and best, seems to us self-evident; all morality must have its source in God: but the question is one of judgment, whether the simple *suggestions* of good, any more than those of evil, arising within us by laws of association sometimes, (*always* perhaps some would maintain,) are all to be ascribed to the great Source of souls. We think it more true and philosophical to regard the communion of God as strictly operative in the *conscience*, while we should confine our definition of the action of the *Holy Spirit* to that conscious, and warmer, and fuller influx of the energy of God's holiness and love, by which He seems occasionally to pour over the soul a tide of fresh and overpowering emotions, to bear it heavenward, and fix its life thenceforth in steadfastness and strength of goodness. All the daily or hourly turns of thought and emotion, the pleasant instincts of kindness or charity, the ascendancy of a pure and noble over a base desire in the heart, and the many countless successions of what is true and good in feeling and imagination and reflection, amidst much that is dark and sinful,—these we look upon as resulting from the inborn forces of the soul. Surely genius is of the same order. None can deny that it is innate; none can rationally affirm or suppose that every brilliant thought of the poet, or exquisite image of grace seizing upon the mind of the artist, is a direct gift, upon the instant, from the Eternal mind. The soul is a wonderful spring of living forces, just as the will is an agent of free and mysterious power; and these are united together in the animal frame of man, that bears with it the indelible and unaccountable traces of its origin and ancestry; and when the soul becomes here incorporated, and the will, taking its character at once from the shrine where it has to serve, and the spirit that dwells there, rising into maturity, begins to order the ways and enter on the works of life, a human career is commenced for time or for eternity.

After speaking of the general action of the spirit of God, Mr. Sears treats of "the Holy Spirit," whose power Christianity has been the means of directing and rendering effectual, and which he regards as differing "in degree, not in kind," from the former. We might extract many beautiful passages from this part of the book, especially, perhaps, from the chapter on "the Primal Innocence;" but the want of space compels us to pass on, and we must be content to re-

commend the book to the perusal of our readers. In proceeding to the third part of his subject—Regeneration—Mr. Sears appears to us again inexact in his statements. He speaks of regeneration as implying three things: "1st, A cleansing away of all hereditary corruption." He afterwards admits, however, "that the work of regeneration is not generally consummated here;" and yet, after noticing his views, as before-mentioned, of the increasing power of transmitted evil, we could not imagine how the author could look upon the world as in any other condition than that of one rushing headlong into darkness, unless his theory of regeneration provided, as on the face of it it seems at first to do, for the absolute *extinction* of this hereditary corruption among the regenerate of mankind; so that, here and there, an entirely new thread (as it were) of moral life is begun, wherever regeneration has done its work. If, according to the primary law laid down by our author, corrupt tendencies are unfailingly transmitted, and "increase in strength and volume with every transmission," then, it is naturally asked, what can regeneration do for man at all? Can it cast out those evil tendencies entirely? Then their transmission is not regular and unfailing, "a universal fact and irreversible law of descent." Does it only weaken their power and cripple their action? Then they cannot be supposed to increase in strength and volume by every transmission, however faithfully transmitted. We were inclined to believe that Mr. Sears intended this difficulty to be solved by the first method; that by the insertion in his postulate of the words, "by every generation that transmits them," he meant to imply that, in the case of the regenerate, this corruption is no longer transmitted; and this appeared the more probable, as he is wont to speak of these evil tendencies as *transmissive*, rather than as necessarily *transmitted*, and distinctly declares, too, of the regenerate man, that "all hereditary evil is expelled;" but then, in classifying the forces of human nature generally, he includes these hereditary "proclivities" to evil, and does not speak of them as only usual or common, but as universal.

We are driven, therefore, from one alternative to another, till we are stranded at last upon this singular theory, as the only one that his various statements will really admit of, viz. that every generation and individual does regularly transmit

evil tendencies, which increase in strength and volume as they descend, no matter what the character of the individual or generation transmitting them,—tendencies that are only checked in each individual by the free power of voluntary effort under the helping and illumining Spirit of God. Now, is it probable, is it consistent with the laws and character of God, is it at all in harmony with Mr. Sears' own view of the moral relation of father to son, and generation to generation, to suppose that the virtue and excellence of a parent—scrupulously curbing every evil propensity and trampling down each sinful impulse—should have no influence upon the innate dispositions of the child? that the tide of evil inheritance, rolling on and expanding by a systematic law of progress, should be larger and stronger in the offspring, instead of less and weaker? Is it consonant with experience that goodness does not leave as deep an impress behind it as its opposite? And surely it cannot be supposed that the evil propensities becoming *greater* in the child or descendant, a proportionate strength of nature,—of moral purpose and will,—must usually accompany them, to balance and subdue them; and if not, then, with each generation, no matter what the character of its predecessor, it becomes continually more and more difficult to hold these hereditary evil tendencies in check; regeneration, in fact, becomes itself more and more problematical (on any but an Antinomian theory at least), and the degeneracy of the race is ensured. This question necessarily opened itself again, on attempting to give the view of regeneration held by this writer. We can only reconcile the difficulties and discrepancies of his theories by giving up his strange postulates, commented upon at the outset, and substituting for it the one we then named. On this view of human nature, evil tendencies may be transmitted through a long series of generations, but with a constantly fluctuating force, always proportionate to the degree in which they have been indulged. So far as we can see, it may thus happen that, in the course of many generations, some peculiar dispositions of the natural man, by successive diminution, may be entirely lost, or gradually exchanged for others. This view alone will account for the phenomenon, often alluded to by Mr. Sears, but utterly inexplicable on his own principle, viz. the reappearance, after many generations, of old vices inherent in the original stock.

Dormant for some time, but slightly yielded to by one generation, and still more by the next, though yet not sufficiently to become conspicuous, in the succeeding generation they may renew their ancient vigour and sweep everything before them. But this can only be where the advancing wave of evil tendency fluctuates, or is liable to fluctuate, continually, and not where it steadily advances with growing power. We must speak, therefore, of regeneration as implying the cleansing away of hereditary corruption from the individual habits of life, so as to hand down a purer and nobler family type to the next heir; but if *all* hereditary corruption be cleansed away, then we cannot see what is left for the inheritance of the next generation. Particular evil tendencies can only be finally cleared away by a resolute and holy nature, in cases where a very small inheritance of the same has been received: probably no regenerate soul cleanses away all hereditary corruption; the seeds must remain in man's nature if there be (as we suppose) any transmission of them, much as each individual may impair their life and vigour by his own moral fidelity to God. It must not be supposed, from what we have said, that either Mr. Sears or ourselves attribute all sin to these inherited tendencies to evil; but only that these render man much more liable to sin, and better explain the phenomenon of his divided consciousness, and the strength of the conflict in which duty has to engage. But we must pass on.

In treating of regeneration, Mr. Sears attempts to analyse the process, and to show the tests by which its efficacy is known. And here he urges with much power his conviction that there is (however difficult of perception or absolutely invisible to us) a broad distinction, such as the Scriptures are wont to dwell upon, between the natural or the spiritual and regenerate man,—the tares and the wheat, —the goats and the sheep. "Every heart," he says, "has its ruling passion, every life has its ruling principle. It is true that, under the urbanities and simulations of life, this does not always appear. But could you lay off from any one's heart all its envelopments till you came to the real man, you would find some principle to which all others held a secondary and subordinate place." And though it is true that "men are not all good nor all bad," though "good and evil are mixed up in every man's soul," though "the best man is not all a saint, nor the worst man all self," yet still a

bond fide distinction lies (present to the eye of God) in the deep-seated and guiding principles of life, which often produce the most unlike results in outward conduct, or are themselves most widely different in the men whose bearing with the world seems remarkably similar. In treating of that self-knowledge which is necessary to the sense of sin, and the first step therefore to regeneration, Mr. Sears cites "temptation," and "the spontaneous workings of the heart" apart from all outward objects and influences, as the best tests of moral condition.

He then proceeds to point out the relation of Christianity to moral conversion, or rather (since actual change or conversion, as he well observes, is not always needed) to the full activity of the spiritual life. He considers that human nature, in its primitive condition "entirely uncorrupt and unperverted, would need no other revelation" than that which comes

. . . "through the deep and clear intuitions of the mind itself, by the manner in which truth affects the higher sensibilities, and by 'intuitive beholding.' Nature would always be an open page, and matter always the true and living symbol of spirit. But when this state of innocence and purity is lost, the Divinity shines through our corruption with refracted and broken rays, other instincts stir within us, and other voices speak than those which come from God. Then it is that a Divine Rule of life, external to man, becomes essential to his regeneration. He must have some sure standard out of himself, by which all that is in him can be brought to the test. Hence another kind of revelation, one which comes from without, with those truths embodied and placed before us which had been darkened in the chaos within. The first revelation comes in the spontaneous workings of the faculties, and is the transfusion of Heaven through the soul. The last comes through agencies external to ourselves, and lays a hand of authority upon us. . . . Not that the inward revealings entirely cease, or can cease; for in that case the outward revelation would be of no avail. It is to clarify this inner light, to restore it to its ancient effulgence, to afford an unerring standard by which to distinguish it from the flicker of strange fire within us, it is for this that we have given us the Word written, and the Word made flesh. So then the unerring voice that speaks from the Bible interprets the voice that speaks in man, and distinguishes it from his own irregular frames and fancies, each harmonising with the other, since each is a separate strain of the eternal melodies." See pp. 168, 171.

This seems to us the true explanation of the power and

province of Scripture and of Christ. The inner voice is too much stifled, too far lost; but God has re-produced it afresh, and it searches out the other from the midst of later and falser sounds, recognises its true correlative, and so calls as to awaken a sympathetic answer, and teach the soul where lay the harmony and truth of its own secret utterances. And just in so far as it does receive a response, just in so far as Christ's teaching (as given in our imperfect records) reaches to the inmost spirit of man, and finds there a witness to its eternal character, do we feel His authority, and own his power as our Master and Guide. To suppose that we can recognise his authority over our moral and spiritual nature in any other way, is simply to strike at the root of all moral and spiritual life, and deny its instinctive capacity of self-recognition. How we can be brought really to love, and honour, and revere our Lord, except through our spiritual *sympathies*, we are at a loss to understand. Mr. Sears then passes on to speak of what he calls "*a new dispensation of the Spirit through the Mediator.*" He says:—

"No finite power and influence can create us anew. No models of human virtue, however pure and perfect, are to regenerate and save us. Rather do they dazzle and mock us with ideals which we can never realise ourselves. I may fix on them my earnest and despairing gaze; but there aloft they shine and shine in vain, giving me gleams of a region of purity and peace which I cannot climb to, and which fall upon my unsunned and frozen nature like the shimmer of moonbeams upon a mass of snow. Christ has placed before me an example of human perfection, and told me to follow in his steps. And is that all? If that *be* all, it were like standing on the shore and helping a drowning man by merely shouting to him to rise and walk the waves. In our fallen and sinful state, it is not first and chiefly an example that we want. We want God. We want divine succour and influence, coming within us with creative power, not primarily to bring us into conformity with some model that is placed before us, but to revive the Divine image within us, so that by its own radiation it shall produce around us the halo of all christian virtues and graces."

So far we can entirely go with our author. He then proceeds to say:—

"Taking the fact which three of the Evangelists have placed so conspicuously in the foreground of their history, that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit, which thus became the inmost

principle of his natural being, it would hence result that the influence emanating from him is the Holy Spirit itself, and this truth shines with great fulness through all the narrative that follows."

Here we must demur to the author's reasoning. The supernatural birth of Christ, whether true or not as an historical fact, is here made a singular enough basis for a conclusion which any reverent reader of Scripture might readily admit, however sceptical he might feel about the authenticity of that miraculous narrative. We cannot so mix up in our ideas, physical events with spiritual energy, as to suppose that any *essential* influence of Christ, as a divinely moral and holy being, depended, or could depend, upon such a feature in his personal history. Settle the historical question as we will, we do not see that the personal holiness or the spiritual influence of Christ is materially affected by the decision. Holy fellowship with God we cannot regard as being ensured by any portentous birth. Why his exceptional character in the historical world, either as supernaturally born, or as endowed with supernatural power, should necessarily affect his exceptional character in the spiritual world as a son of God, an image of God, and a regenerative influence to man, we fail altogether to see. We admit that the determination of those historical questions must affect, in some degree, our personal ideas of Christ; and that we shall not so readily separate him in our thoughts from the rest of the human race, if we recognise in his outer and temporal life nothing uncommon; but this uncommon personality is not certainly needed as the foundation of his uncommon virtue. It is philosophically *admissible* to recognise in his character absolute perfection, while questioning the reality, because the historical truth, of the existence of miraculous power or miraculous birth, or even of the resurrection. We are only stating the truth as broadly and distinctly as possible. It is the old ground of our difference with Mr. Newman. We do not see what is *necessarily* gained, in the way of moral perfection or spiritual influence, by an exceptional earthly condition. We quite perceive that our decision is *historically* of importance as impugning or supporting the value of our scriptures as we have them. But if we think that a true and rational criticism does eliminate the supernatural from Christianity, then we ask, wherefore our view of Christ as a living image of the Father, and a spiritual power

in the world, is necessarily to be given up. But here it will perhaps be said (with regard to the one point of the supernatural birth of Christ), that we are receding from our previously-expressed opinion respecting hereditary tendencies to evil. It may be urged that, upon our own theory, this event would be of importance, for that Jesus, if he had no earthly father, would be necessarily saved from much hereditary evil. It might be so, certainly, we admit; but the argument would not be conclusive. And if we maintain this, we give up simultaneously much of the efficacy of his conflict and victory. Was he "tempted on *all* points as we are," and yet only tempted from without, and not by any instinctive propensities of his nature? Or were these at least very mildly inherited through his gentle mother alone? The admission, if it adds to the probability of his perfection, takes from the glory of his life. But surely if we can believe in anything exceptional or isolated at all in the world's history, it is very conceivable that, even where *all* the usual temptations and difficulties incidental to life, whether coming from society without, or human nature within, have been present to a single soul, it should yet remain firm to the holy principle, arising and constantly vivified within it, from the earliest years, and gradually filling the whole man, and unfolding every faculty to the penetrating Spirit of God. Supposing, therefore, hereditary tendencies to evil to have come down to Christ precisely as to other men, we see not why he should not become victorious in his conflict with them, and must so honour and revere him more than we could do, did we think him (upon the testimony of history) exempted in some degree from trials and infirmities that press grievously on the race at large. Mr. Sears does not regard Christ as by his birth exempt from "inheriting proclivities to wrong," but only as made thus more distinctly a Mediator, "*God with us.*"

He regards his regenerative power with the world as consummated by his removal from earth and the flesh. He says:—

"One of the grand results which the death of Christ was to accomplish, was to bring the Holy Ghost by taking away the hiding of its power. The interposition of a mortal body between the spiritual Christ and his followers, was as a cloud that concealed the sun, and intercepted its rays. The Comforter was *with* them, but

not *in* them. He had unfolded to them an infinite system of truth, but its doctrines lay cold and dead in their memories. The seed had been deposited in the soil, but not yet had come the warm sunshine and the spring gales. . . . He knew that, when free of the body, he should have access to the minds of his followers by means more efficacious than those of language. His enemies thought that when the body was bruised in pieces, all was at an end. He knew that this was tearing away the chief hindrance of his power. They thought that, by killing the body, they put Christ out of the way. He knew that this would bring him more completely into the midst of his disciples, yea, into the heart of humanity, as that power which should shake down old dynasties, and change the face of the world. 'I go away that I may come again.' I withdraw from your sight that I may get nearer to your spirit."

Mr. Sears considers that there can be no life in Christendom, if God is sought without a mediator; that in this case "the idea of God is dissipated and fades off into pantheism." But it is not as a mediator who saves from punishment that he believes Christ's efficacy to be felt, but as a being out of whom flows "God's all-renewing Spirit in unceasing waves of light and love," the mediator and ever-present help of the church and the soul, where he makes his truth to live and glow anew perpetually.

We cannot quite accompany our author here, or understand his ground for attributing direct spiritual influence to Christ. To insist on the value of his life and character, as given us in Scripture, for its mediating power to human thought when we seek to know something of the attributes and spirit of God, is the simple and necessary result of accepting Christianity as true and divine. And when a church or body of men assemble together with the desire of mutual improvement and united worship, there must be some clear conception, such as the Gospels alone furnish, of a moral and spiritual aim and ideal held by all its members in common, towards which all hearts turn, and in the fulfilment of which all will strive together. But is it necessary to the welfare of a church, that it should believe in the immediate and personal influence of Christ's spirit upon its members? and what if men deny all possibility of proving such an influence to be anything but imaginary? Is it not sufficient for man that, through his thoughts and his knowledge of Christ, he can come directly to God, and feel *at once* the Father's aid, and

receive into his inmost soul the ever-living Comforter? Can any but the all-pervading spirit *directly* cherish the life of the universal church? Is it not merely as a mental medium, bringing man to a better knowledge and understanding and love of God, that Christianity, or rather Christ, becomes such a saving and regenerating power in society? Is it, further, as a *directly* exerted, and quite new spiritual power,—a power which we gain from Christ himself, and could not gain immediately from God,—that we are to bless the mediatorial function of Jesus? Mr. Sears appears to believe so, and some of our readers may agree with him; we confess that we do not see evidence of a theory which can have no logical or Scriptural demonstration, and must be left to individual consciousness, if indeed there can be any evidence in the region of human experience, which would establish such a relation between Christ and the soul; and it must be remembered that the truth of the assertion does not depend upon its power to interest men and draw them together, and make a church *prosperous*; for on the same ground might we advocate the truth of Mormonism or Irvingism, or any other fanaticism. Falsehood may, for a time, exercise a more uniting influence than truth itself. Is there any possible ground of experience for believing more than this—that Christ's vivid revelation of God does serve perpetually to draw men to God, and makes them seek *directly* that Fountain, and sole Fountain, of all living and active holiness, from which his own was but the brightest emanation? Until we have some metaphysical means of distinguishing the spirit of Christ from the spirit of God within us—which Mr. Sears will scarcely maintain—there can be nothing more than assumption in any Unitarian's belief that Christ holds direct intercourse with the spirits of his living disciples.

There is a passage in this book (p. 211) in which Mr. Sears seems to show that he holds an Arian belief in the pre-existence of our Lord, but we cannot see that it forms any necessary part of his theology as here exhibited. His view of the atonement is quite consonant with the other parts of his creed; it is purely spiritual and rational. He looks upon it as a doctrine, "not of imputed but of imparted righteousness; as God in Christ coming anew into the heart of humanity, and making conquest of all its powers,

striking down the persecutor with shafts of light, and swaying vast multitudes, because on them 'the Holy Ghost fell.'" Quoting Tyndal, Mr. Sears speaks of one mediator Christ as "an atone-maker, a peace-maker, and brynger into grace and fauour, havyng full power to do so." But is this view of the spiritual influence of Christ's submission and patient love properly to be called an acceptance of the doctrine of the atonement? Whatever the word meant originally, it now implies a doctrine of substitution, the atoning by one glorious act for the iniquities of others, for the sin, perhaps, of the world. In giving his own view of the atonement, we think he discards the doctrine (properly so called) altogether, and might have done well to avoid the word, or use the term reconciliation and regeneration of man in its stead. But in previously treating of what he calls the *exhibition* theory of the atonement, we cannot recognise the essential truth which, according to Mr. Sears, is contained in that view. He speaks of the cross as, "in a most important sense, the expression of God's hatred of sin. There," he says, "is the point where the awful antagony [antagonism we suppose is meant, such American coinage is hardly current here] between the eternal purity and human corruption was even brought down into the sphere of sense, and made apprehensible there." It appears to be strange that God's indignation at sin should be shown in such a way; that the guiltless should suffer, if it were the peculiar purpose of God, by that death, to declare his aversion to sin. The whole view seems to us only tenable on a Trinitarian or Arian theory (on which latter ground Mr. Sears receives it), that so singular and conspicuous a scheme of human redemption or regeneration could never have entered the mind of Deity, except for the most important of purposes, the manifestation of his abhorrence of sin. But those who look upon the human Christ's character as the renovating influence furnished by God for the sanctification of men, and do not conceive of any visitation of death upon Deity or an Archangel, naturally cannot see wherein God's hatred for sin is so peculiarly shadowed forth in the suffering and patient death of the most glorious of his children. This view would make the leading feature of Christianity to be a *stern condemnation of sin*, which is surely a much more prominent characteristic of Judaism and the legal system of Moses; to us the most distinguishing trait of Christianity

appears to be a *loving persuasiveness to excellence*, through the divine character of Jesus, by its sublime grace and tenderness wooing man back to God. And why should we imagine some abstract moral purpose lurking in such an event as that of Calvary? The very term, "schemes or systems of redemption," seems to give altogether a strange and inadequate idea of the serene and orderly thought of God. We cannot imagine the Eternal Mind planning dispensations and counter-dispensations, one to eke out the other. And it appears to us simply a degradation of Christ and Christianity to treat them as mere instruments or parts of a complicated plan for purifying and elevating the race. God is the great ποιητης, and not the puzzled mechanic of the Universe; and when a heavenly soul, like that of Christ, issues on the stage of existence, embodying, in human form and visible life, the pure attributes of Deity, and revealing Him to man, whether in miraculous acts of beneficent power, or in the inspired language of prophetic insight, or in the perfect ministrations of a serene and holy will, we see, not the careful provision by God of a rare instrument designed for the accomplishment of a peculiarly constructed plan, but the spontaneous utterance of His divinest thought, the blossoming of the goodliest tree in Paradise, as the genial breath of Heaven sighed among its branches. Nature, and human nature, have the same history and origin in the ever-affluent conceptions of God. But we must here close this imperfect review. Mr. Sears' metaphorical style of writing is to us forcible and interesting,—and his view of religion and Christianity is, we think, well deserving of attention. We have to thank the American Unitarian Association for giving us so thoughtful and eloquent a production. It would be well did tract-associations often adopt moral and theological essays of as little pretension and as much earnestness and ability.

ART. III.—LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE AND PAINTING.

Lectures on Architecture and Painting, delivered at Edinburgh in November, 1853. By John Ruskin. London: Smith, Elder, and Co. 1854.

THE Lectures which Mr. Ruskin has recently published are useful, as containing in a small compass many of his leading views on the subjects to which they relate. Those who are interested in the Preraphaelite controversy will find a lecture devoted to it; and there is a valuable, but too brief, summary of the author's personal impressions and reminiscences of Turner.

We must plead guilty to one omission in our recent review of "The Stones of Venice,"—an omission with which Mr. Ruskin in his present book charges most of the reviewers of that work. When we adverted to the evil effect produced on architecture by the exclusion of the common workman from the task of designing as well as executing the ornamental parts of buildings, by the adoption of a system of working from stereotyped patterns, and by the requirement of extreme accuracy and refinement of workmanship to the sacrifice of freshness and originality, we did not bring pointedly before our readers the effect which our author conceives the same system to have had on the life of the workman. "In the Gothic times," he says, in the addenda to the present Lectures, "writing, painting, carving, casting—it mattered not what—were all works done by thoughtful and happy men; and the illumination of the volume, and the carving and casting of wall and gate, employed, not thousands, but millions, of true and noble *artists* over all Christian lands. Men in the same position are now left utterly without intellectual power or pursuit; and being unhappy in their work, they rebel against it: hence one of the worst forms of unchristian Socialism." At the present day, as he says in his former work, handicraft loses its honour, and the workman is supposed to have achieved great things when he has shown sufficient capability in design to be made a

gentleman, and put in a studio by himself; and is not allowed to work as a designer till he has done so. That this has largely contributed to make workmen look with indifference on their work, and regard it in a merely mercenary point of view, we do not doubt; and we may add, that its effect in producing a half-employed, frivolous, improvident class of ornamental designers, wanting in the respectability both of the artist and the artisan, has been also prejudicial. Here, as elsewhere, the spirit of modern civilisation has placed a great gulf between master and man. A large manufacturer of fancy goods may be at once an excellent designer, a better workman than any in his shops, and a far-seeing man of business; but this equality of culture belongs to the head of a concern only. In the subordinate ranks, division of labour steps in, appropriates the whole man to the cultivation of his own narrowest idiosyncrasy, and concentrates all his practical working force on the most painfully accurate copying and multiplication of the ideas of other persons.

But the tendencies alluded to extend much further than to the separation of the talents for design from the faculties of execution. We consider it well made out that this separation is one great cause of the lamentable deficiency of really high artistic qualities in our ornamental work; and we earnestly trust that a growing conviction of this fact may issue in providing a wide field, where workmen in particular kinds may take refuge from the narrowing conditions of most modern work, in a freer and more general culture. The division of labour in this case involves a positive deterioration of the products of labour, and a wholesome qualification of a principle, the good effects of which have been exaggerated, is introduced.* But we are still at the beginning of the wider questions connected with that division of labour which is

* One of the noblest examples of modern Gothic now in existence is the church erected by the followers of the late Mr. Irving, in Gordon Square. When we visited it, we were informed by the courteous cicerone, who takes pride in showing it to all comers without fee or reward, that all the capitals in the richly-carven chapel behind the high altar, were designed by the men who executed them. We advise any one who doubts the general soundness of Mr. Ruskin's architectural theories to examine this church. He will find something to criticise, but he cannot fail to be struck with the pleasing and impressive results of the endless variety of the sculpture, and the absence of all machine work.

every day becoming more and more the characteristic of all our operations, and which forms the basis on which our vast material progress appears to rest. The consciousness of this fact, and the fear of seeming to give a precipitate adherence to conclusions which might be thought to follow from Mr. Ruskin's statements on the subject, have probably had more to do with the abstinence of critics from noticing this portion of his labours than he imagines.

We cannot doubt that the vast instrumentalities involved in the division of labour have their appointed uses in the providential economy of the world. They are so indispensable to the victories of humanity over inanimate nature, so stupendous in their results when applied in that direction, and so consonant with the instincts and habitudes of the most efficient practical men, that we must once for all take them as part of the existing machinery of society. Men, it is true, are at present rather apt to be blind to the moral dangers inseparable from their employment. The world of the nineteenth century has been dazzled with its material wealth, and too much disposed to regard all wealth-producing agencies as having something positively good in their own nature. Nothing is more common than to hear men of practice sneer at any doubt which may be thrown out whether their favourite systems are all-sufficing. It is therefore not surprising that others should declaim in an unpractical manner against the indispensable. But all such declamation is useless in a direct sense, and only useful in calling attention to wants which might otherwise pass unrecognised. The division of labour must continue; although the result undoubtedly is, that the art which a man's days are spent in practising does not give any adequate employment to his spiritual energies.

Let it, however, be frankly acknowledged that this is in itself an evil, and a large step will have been made towards the counteraction of the evil. We are far from thinking that this acknowledgment in a complete sense has yet been made. None will contend that the indefinite multiplication of consumable articles is in itself the final scope of human endeavour; but beyond the concession of this negative truth there is some discrepancy of opinion. No inconsiderable class of persons think very little of the importance of true mental culture to the labouring man. They are content to leave

him in a very limited sphere, and confine their idea of progress to the development of the moral virtues, which will enable him to bear himself worthily in that sphere. The enlargement of the nature of the man is not part of their system; and the incompleteness of that system may find no practical demonstration till some great external change subjects those who have been trained under it to new conditions with which they are incompetent to deal. A political convulsion, placing the destinies of a nation in the hands of the depositaries of its physical force, or a social revolution, like a great emigration, suddenly changing an overstocked into an understocked labour-market, makes visible the danger of a narrow intellectual culture in the mass of the people. Another class see that one of the results of material progress ought to be a wider field and improved opportunities for mental progress; and the more enlightened of this class admit that when material progress has reached a certain point, men should avail themselves of a portion of their conquest over matter for the purposes of *leisure*. This class are not at all indifferent to education. They are rather in danger of overlooking the moral nature in an exclusive devotion to the intellectual; but they are still a good way from recognising the evil which there is in divorcing both intellectual and moral culture from the engrossing occupations of life. Their schools, their lectures, their debating societies, are all things apart from the work of the furrow and the loom; and they treat this work rather as a necessary evil to be got over, a mere price to be paid for entrance into a perfectly different sphere, than as a proper component part of the rational activity of the whole man. This may be necessary, and to a certain extent, and until the unlimited improvement of machinery shall have cast all mere drudgery on iron workmen, we believe that it is so. What we contend is, that it ought to be looked on as an evil, and every counteraction of its tendencies most sedulously sought.

The evil influence acts in more than one direction. All men ought to be willing to do *their share* of the drudgery which needs to be done; but it is an evil in itself that a man's chief practical force should be expended on drudgery, and there is the resultant evil, that he will, in such circumstances, strive to escape from drudgery altogether. There is waste of energy, and there is rebellion against tedium; but

a fair apportionment is not attained. This is not all; for the intellectual culture suffers too. Paradoxical as it may seem to use the word in reference to the working class, such culture is essentially *dilettante*, as all intellectual culture must be which has no healthy relation to practice. Hence crudeness, half views, presumption, and their necessary sequel, extreme gullibility. The workman is above his own work, and unfit for higher work, the ready prey of the impostor and the demagogue. It is therefore an object of first-rate importance to enlarge the practical sphere of the workman, and to import into it as much exercise of the moral and mental faculties as possible. We believe that much may be done in this way; and one of the greatest steps in the right direction will be the admission of the workman to a share in the privileges of the capitalist, by an alteration of the laws of partnership. When the man who feeds the machine has his 50*l.* or 100*l.* in the trade, his notions of social and political science will become very different. At present the trade is a matter wholly external to himself, from which he draws a hireling's wage; and the investment of his savings in the Friendly Society or the Savings Bank gives no employment to his judgment. That freer exercise of the whole mind in the direction of art, on which Mr. Ruskin so strongly insists, would be another admirable means of culture; and every improvement in the mental condition of any section of the working class which does not remove them away from their brethren will diffuse a healthy and wide-spreading influence all around. If we differ from him, it is that we seem to discern in his writings a certain impatience of all merely mechanical labour, which, in our opinion, must have a delusive tendency, unless it is regarded simply and strictly as indicating a very distant aim to be approximated to by a variety of means more or less direct. Nevertheless we heartily sympathise with all his exhortations to society, never more needed than at present, to select their purchases (not of works of art only) among products which call forth the higher nature of the producer. We extract the principal passage in which the subject is dealt with:—

"You know how often it is difficult to be wisely charitable, to do good without multiplying the sources of evil. You know that to give alms is nothing unless you give thought also; and that therefore it is written, not 'blessed is he that *feedeth* the poor,'

but, 'blessed is he that *considereth* the poor.' And you know that a little thought and a little kindness are often worth more than a great deal of money.

"Now this charity of thought is not merely to be exercised towards the poor; it is to be exercised towards all men. There is assuredly no action of our social life, however unimportant, which, by kindly thought, may not be made to have a beneficial influence upon others; and it is impossible to spend the smallest sum of money, for any not absolutely necessary purpose, without a grave responsibility attaching to the manner of spending it. The object we ourselves covet may, indeed, be desirable and harmless, so far as we are concerned; but the providing us with it may, perhaps, be a very prejudicial occupation to some one else. And then it becomes instantly a moral question, whether we are to indulge ourselves or not. Whatever we wish to buy, we ought first to consider not only if the thing be fit for us, but if the manufacture of it be a wholesome and happy one; and if, on the whole, the sum we are going to spend will do as much good spent in this way as it would if spent in any other way. It may be said that we have not time to consider all this before we make a purchase. But no time could be spent in a more important duty; and God never imposes a duty without giving the time to do it. Let us, however, only acknowledge the principle;—once make up your mind to allow the consideration of the *effect* of your purchases to regulate the *kind* of your purchase, and you will soon easily find grounds enough to decide upon. The plea of ignorance will never take away our responsibilities. It is written, 'If thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it?'

"I could press this on you at length, but I hasten to apply the principle to the subject of art. I will do so broadly at first, and then come to architecture. Enormous sums are spent annually by this country in what is called patronage of art, but in what is for the most part merely buying what strikes our fancies. True and judicious patronage there is indeed; many a work of art is bought by those who do not care for its possession, to assist the struggling artist, or relieve the unsuccessful one. But for the most part, I fear we are too much in the habit of buying simply what we like best, wholly irrespective of any good to be done, either to the artist or to the schools of the country. Now let us remember, that every farthing we spend on objects of art has influence over men's minds and spirits, far more than over their bodies. By the purchase of every print which hangs on your walls, of every cup out of which you drink, and every table off which you eat your bread, you are educating a mass of men in one way or another. You are either employing them healthily or unwholesomely; you are

making them lead happy or unhappy lives; you are leading them to look at nature, and to love her—to think, to feel, to enjoy,—or you are blinding them to nature, and keeping them bound, like beasts of burden, in mechanical and monotonous employments. We shall all be asked one day, why we did not think more of this.

“Well but, you will say, how can we decide what we ought to buy, but by our likings? You would not have us buy what we don't like? No: but I would have you thoroughly sure that there *is* an absolute right and wrong in all art, and try to find out the right, and like that; and, secondly, sometimes to sacrifice a careless preference or fancy, to what you know is for the good of your fellow-creatures. For instance, when you spend a guinea upon an engraving, what have you done? You have paid a man for a certain number of hours to sit at a dirty table, in a dirty room, inhaling the fumes of nitric acid, stooping over a steel plate, on which, by the help of a magnifying glass, he is, one by one, laboriously cutting out certain notches and scratches, of which the effect is to be the copy of another man's work. You cannot suppose you have done a very charitable thing in this! On the other hand, whenever you buy a small water-colour drawing, you have employed a man happily and healthily, working in a clean room (if he likes), or more probably still, out in the pure country and fresh air, thinking about something, and learning something every moment; not straining his eyesight, nor breaking his back, but working in ease and happiness. Therefore if you *can* like a modest water-colour better than an elaborate engraving, do. There may, indeed, be engravings which are worth the suffering it costs to produce them; but at all events, engravings of public dinners and laying of foundation-stones, and such things, might be dispensed with. The engraving ought to be a first-rate picture of a first-rate subject to be worth buying.”

We shall not, of course, be understood as desiring that the working class should not employ their minds on other subjects besides their work. On the other hand, we consider that one of the most valuable effects of having work to do in which the mind is brought into action, is to train the mind for acting soundly in a wider sphere. The *dilettante* is not he who busies himself with a culture which he is not forced to attend to, but he who meddles with it without bringing a practical and well-seasoned judgment to bear upon it, or looking at it in a practical way. Bye-work is good; but it ought to be *bye-work*: and intellectual exercises, taken up as the diversion of scant leisure, are not likely to have this character, if the mind has no practical sphere to train its

working power. We fear that we may be somewhat at issue with Mr. Ruskin as to the advantage of one sphere of mental activity—the political. We regretted to observe in “The Stones of Venice” some disposition to throw cold water upon the efforts of Italian patriots, because they were not able to point out many tangible grievances connected with the Austrian administration. The one great grievance under a military despotism is the exclusion of the mass of subjects from the high education involved in self-government. Surely if there is a well-established fact, it is, that the mass of mankind will never attain a great and masculine development where they are shut out from the ambitions and contests of citizenship, and from the consideration of the larger questions of social and political organisation. Can it be necessary for us to remind Mr. Ruskin (using expressions of his own with a new application) that the time of the freedom of the Italian republics led up to the great age of Italian intellect, and that the time of small tyrannies merging by degrees in large despotisms has led down from it, and that this has been but an acting over again of the world-old dramas of Greece and Rome? No diffusion of art-culture, and no amount of intellect introduced into the private occupations of life, will replace civil freedom. Else why were the *Græculus* of the age of Juvenal, and the later Byzantine, so contemptible? In Italy it is not a question between monarchy or aristocracy and democracy; between the abstract deductions from a shallow mathematical theory of human equality and the results of the historic constitution of man. It is a question between citizenship and military despotism;—that accursed condition of things which, as depending upon mere will and force, John Locke wisely branded as “no form of civil government at all,” but in its own nature usurping and treasonable. The keen-eyed democrats of Athens saw no necessary immorality in a βασιλεία rightfully established; it was the τυραννίς which was foul and unnatural. Mr. Ruskin speaks severely of the little care which Italian municipalities take of works of art, and praises the comparative solicitude of the Austrian authorities. But how much of the neglect arises from the absence of property in the objects neglected? The Israelite could not sing the Lord’s song in a strange land; and who shall harshly condemn the Italian if he is indifferent about preserving the beauty of conquered

and enslaved cities? The Italian character has much in it that is worthless; but that is the fault of its picture-cleaning tyrants, whose worst crime it is that they not only stifle liberty, but do all in their power to unfit their subjects for enjoying it at any future time.

We pass to another and a very different subject. In his present work Mr. Ruskin broadly lays down the principle, that "ornamentation is the principal part of architecture." After explaining, that by "principal part" he does not mean "primary requisite," and that convenience must be consulted before decoration begins, he thus continues in illustration of his views:—

"But when the house, or church, or other building is thus far designed, and the forms of its dead walls and dead roofs are up to this point determined, comes the divine part of the work—namely, to turn these dead walls into living ones. Only Deity, that is to say, those who are taught by Deity, can do that.

"And that is to be done by painting and sculpture, that is to say, by ornamentation. Ornamentation is, therefore, the principal part of architecture, considered as a subject of fine art.

"Now observe. It will at once follow from this principle, that *a great architect must be a great sculptor or painter.*

"This is a universal law. No person who is not a great sculptor or painter *can* be an architect. If he is not a sculptor or painter, he can only be a *builder*.

"The three greatest architects hitherto known in the world were Phidias, Giotto, and Michael Angelo; with all of whom architecture was only their play, sculpture and painting their work. All great works of architecture in existence are either the work of single sculptors or painters, or of societies of sculptors and painters, acting collectively for a series of years. A Gothic cathedral is properly to be defined as a piece of the most magnificent associative sculpture, arranged on the noblest principles of building, for the service and delight of multitudes; and the proper definition of architecture, as distinguished from sculpture, is merely 'the art of designing sculpture for a particular place, and placing it there on the best principles of building.'

"Hence it clearly follows, that in modern days we have no *architects*. The term 'architecture' is not so much as understood by us. I am very sorry to be compelled to the discourtesy of stating this fact; but a fact it is, and a fact which it is necessary to state strongly.

"Hence also it will follow, that the first thing necessary to the possession of a school of architecture is the formation of a school

of able sculptors, and that till we have that, nothing we do can be called architecture at all.

"This, then, being my second proposition, the so-called 'architects' of the day, as the reader will imagine, are not willing to admit it, or to admit any statement which at all involves it; and every statement, tending in this direction, which I have hitherto made, has of course been met by eager opposition; opposition which, perhaps, would have been still more energetic, but that architects have not, I think, till lately, been quite aware of the lengths to which I was prepared to carry the principle.

"The arguments, or assertions, which they generally employ against this second proposition and its consequences, are the following:—

"First, That the true nobility of architecture consists, not in decoration (or sculpture), but in the 'disposition of masses,' and that architecture is, in fact, the 'art of proportion.'

"It is difficult to overstate the enormity of the ignorance which this popular statement implies. For the fact is, that *all* art, and all nature, depend on the 'disposition of masses.' Painting, sculpture, music, and poetry, depend all equally on the 'proportion,' whether of colours, stones, notes, or words. Proportion is a principle, not of architecture, but of existence. It is by the laws of proportion that stars shine, that mountains stand, and rivers flow. Man can hardly perform any act of his life, can hardly utter two words of innocent speech, or move his hand in accordance with those words, without involving some reference, whether taught or instinctive, to the laws of proportion. And in the fine arts, it is impossible to move a single step, or to execute the smallest and simplest piece of work, without involving all those laws of proportion in their full complexity. To arrange (by invention) the folds of a piece of drapery, or dispose the locks of hair on the head of a statue, requires as much sense and knowledge of the laws of proportion as to dispose the masses of a cathedral. The one are, indeed, smaller than the other, but the relations between 1, 2, 4, and 8, are precisely the same as the relations between 6, 12, 24, and 48. So that the assertion that 'architecture is *par excellence* the art of proportion,' could never be made except by persons who know nothing of art in general; and, in fact, never *is* made except by those architects, who, not being artists, fancy that the one poor æsthetic principle of which they *are* cognisant is the whole of art. They find that the 'disposition of masses' is the only thing of importance in the art with which they are acquainted, and fancy, therefore, that it is peculiar to that art; whereas the fact is, that all great art *begins* exactly where theirs *ends*, with the 'disposition of masses.' The assertion that Greek architecture, as opposed to Gothic architecture, is the 'architecture of proportion,' is another

of the results of the same broad ignorance. First, it is a calumny of the old Greek style itself, which, like every other good architecture that ever existed, depends more on its grand figure sculpture, than on its proportions of parts; so that to copy the form of the Parthenon without its friezes and frontal statuary, is like copying the figure of a human being without its eyes and mouth; and, in the second place, so far as modern pseudo-Greek work *does* depend on its proportions more than Gothic work, it does so, not because it is better proportioned, but because it has nothing *but* proportion to depend upon. Gesture is in like manner of more importance to a pantomime actor than to a tragedian, not because his gesture is more refined, but because he has no tongue. And the proportions of our common Greek work are important to it undoubtedly, but not because they are or ever can be more subtle than Gothic proportion, but because that work has no sculpture, nor colour, nor imagination, nor sacredness, nor any other quality whatsoever in it, but ratios of measures. And it is difficult to express with sufficient force the absurdity of the supposition that there is more room for refinements of proportion in the relations of seven or eight equal pillars, with the triangular end of a roof above them, than between the shafts, and buttresses, and porches, and pinnacles, and vaultings, and towers, and all other doubly and trebly multiplied magnificences of membership which form the framework of a Gothic temple.

“Second reply.—It is often said, with some appearance of plausibility, that I dwell in all my writings on little things and contemptible details, and not on essential and large things. Now, in the first place, as soon as our architects become capable of doing and managing little and contemptible things, it will be time to talk about larger ones; at present I do not see that they can design so much as a niche or a bracket, and therefore they need not as yet think about anything larger. For although, as both just now, and always, I have said, there is as much science of arrangement needed in the designing of a small group of parts as of a large one, yet assuredly designing the larger one is *not the easier* work of the two. For the eye and mind can embrace the smaller object more completely; and if the powers of conception are feeble, they get embarrassed by the inferior members which fall *within* the divisions of the larger design. So that, of course, the best way is to begin with the smaller features; for most assuredly, those who cannot design small things cannot design large ones; and yet, on the other hand, whoever can design small things *perfectly*, can design whatever he chooses. The man who, without copying, and by his own true and original power, can arrange a cluster of rose-leaves nobly, can design anything. He may fail from want of taste or feeling, but not from want of power.

"And the real reason why architects are so eager in protesting against my close examination of details, is simply that they know they dare not meet me on that ground. Being, as I have said, in reality *not* architects, but builders, they can, indeed, raise a large building, with copied ornaments, which, being huge and white, they hope the public may pronounce 'handsome.' But they cannot design a cluster of oak-leaves—no, nor a single human figure—no, nor so much as a beast, or a bird, or a bird's nest! Let them first learn to invent as much as will fill a quatrefoil, or point a pinnacle, and then it will be time enough to reason with them on the principles of the sublime.

"But further. The things that I have dwelt upon in examining buildings, though often their least parts, are always in reality their principal parts. That is the principal part of a building in which its mind is contained, and that, as I have just shown, is its sculpture and painting. I do with a building as I do with a man, watch the eye and the lips: when they are bright and eloquent, the form of the body is of little consequence.

"Whatever other objections have been made to this second proposition arise, as far as I remember, merely from a confusion of the idea of essentialness or primariness with the idea of nobleness. The essential thing in a building—its *first* virtue—is that it be strongly built, and fit for its uses. The noblest thing in a building, and its *highest* virtue, is that it be nobly sculptured or painted.

"One or two important corollaries yet remain to be stated. It has just been said, that to sacrifice the convenience of a building to its external appearance is a futility and absurdity, and that convenience and stability are to be attained at the smallest cost. But when that convenience *has* been attained, the adding the noble characters of life by painting and sculpture, is a work in which all possible cost may be wisely admitted. There is great difficulty in fully explaining the various bearings of this proposition, so as to do away with the chances of its being erroneously understood and applied. For although, in the first designing of the building, nothing is to be admitted but what is wanted, and no useless wings are to be added to balance useful ones, yet in its ultimate designing, when its sculpture and colour become precious, it may be that actual room is wanted to display them, or richer symmetry wanted to deserve them; and in such cases even a useless wall may be built to bear the sculpture, as at San Michele of Lucca, or a useless portion added to complete the cadences, as at St. Mark's of Venice, or useless height admitted in order to increase the impressiveness, as in nearly every noble building in the world. But the right to do this is dependent upon the actual *purpose* of the building becoming no longer one of utility merely; as the purpose of a cathedral is

not so much to shelter the congregation as to awe them. In such cases even some sacrifice of convenience may occasionally be admitted, as in the case of certain forms of pillared churches. But for the most part, the great law is, convenience first, and then the noblest decoration possible; and this is peculiarly the case in domestic buildings, and such public ones as are constantly to be used for practical purposes."

On this subject we need do little more than refer to our review of "The Stones of Venice." A conception which we deem erroneous, there implied only, is here broadly stated. Mr. Ruskin seems to us to miss the boundary line between architecture and sculpture. That a man cannot be a *great* architect without being a great sculptor or painter too, we admit; but to the definition, that architecture is "the art of designing sculpture for a particular place, and placing it there on the best principles of building," we take exception. It would be nearer to the truth, to say that the business of the architect, *as distinguished from the sculptor*, was to find the place for the sculpture, not the sculpture for the place; and we do not call the designing of beautiful arches, shafts, and other things which are appropriate to a particular building only, and in that building form part of the skeleton and structure of the whole, sculptor's work or "ornamentation" at all. This is not a mere dispute upon nomenclature; for we have now no doubt that Mr. Ruskin does undervalue the general effect and symmetry of a building and the correspondence and interdependence of its component parts, except as regards convenience. We repeat our admission, that the sculpture affords the widest field for the display of intellect; and we are prepared to admit that sculpture and the accurate designing of small and ornamental portions of building are the proper exercises for training the architect; but we must also repeat our assertion that Mr. Ruskin is likely to lead his followers to think too much of isolated pieces of sculpture, and too little of general effect, appropriateness, and connection. This will probably do good; because modern architects have gone altogether in the other direction, and, inasmuch as the many noble main types of building already existing have been adopted without thought, and to a certain extent satisfied the public taste, that has been a direction in which conceited mediocrity has had its full swing, and well nigh banished creative genius; but we are not the

less bound to protest that Mr. Ruskin is a one-sided monitor. He is even wrong, we think, in not allowing beauty to be an element in considering the general plan, and in dealing with the structural arrangement as matter of convenience alone. The idea of a building is highly composite; and we must not lose the recollection that a great architect will see in his mind's eye the reconciliation of a beautiful general form with convenience, and will conceive the elaborate beauty of the parts in connection with the scheme of the whole. He will see the sculpture in his imagination; but he will conceive the sculpture and the place for the sculpture by one effort of mind. Mr. Ruskin seems to us in some danger of forgetting his own chapter on Associative Imagination in the *Modern Painters*. We now only maintain that the essential difference between architecture, considered as a fine art, and sculpture, is, that architecture opens a field for the employment of this faculty, which sculpture does not. The designer of the front of Wells Cathedral occupies a different position from the sculptors who executed all the parts of it. It is necessary that the architect, to be really great, should have more than a critical mastery over the sculptor's art. The idea of the whole ought to be in his own mind; and if his sculptors fail completely to realise it, he ought to be able not only to show them where they are wrong, but to step in and supply their deficiencies. But the same power of combination, the same power of *originating* complex designs, is no necessary branch of the sculptor's art. To bring the discussion to a point, we call the constructing of "certain forms of pillared churches," so as "to awe the congregation," a characteristic function of the architect; but we do not see that it is provided for by defining architecture as "the art of designing sculpture for a particular place, and placing it there on the best principles of building."

We wish that the following personal anecdotes of Turner could be extended:—

"And now let me tell you something of his personal character. You have heard him spoken of as ill-natured, and jealous of his brother artists. I will tell you how jealous he was. I knew him for ten years, and during that time had much familiar intercourse with him. I *never once* heard him say an unkind thing of a brother artist; and I *never once* heard him find a fault with another man's

work. I could say this of *no other* artist whom I have ever known.

"But I will add a piece of evidence on this matter of peculiar force. Probably many here have read a book which has been lately published, to my mind one of extreme interest and value, the life of the unhappy artist, Benjamin Haydon. Whatever may have been his faults, I believe no person can read his journal without coming to the conclusion that his heart was honest, and that he does not *wilfully* misrepresent any fact, or any person. Even supposing otherwise, the expression I am going to quote to you would have all the more force, because, as you know, Haydon passed his whole life in war with the Royal Academy, of which Turner was one of the most influential members. Yet, in the midst of one of his most violent expressions of exultation at one of his victories over the Academy, he draws back suddenly with these words:— 'But Turner behaved well, and did me justice.'

"I will give you, however, besides, two plain facts illustrative of Turner's 'jealousy.'

"You have, perhaps not many of you, heard of a painter of the name of Bird; I do not myself know his works, but Turner saw some merit in them: and when Bird first sent a picture to the Academy for exhibition, Turner was on the hanging committee. Bird's picture had great merit; but no place for it could be found. Turner pleaded hard for it. No, the thing was impossible. Turner sat down and looked at Bird's picture a long time; then insisted that a place must be found for it. He was still met by the assertion of impracticability. He said no more, but took down one of his own pictures, sent it out of the Academy, and hung Bird's in its place.

"Match that, if you can, among the annals of hanging committees. But he could do nobler things than this.

"When Turner's picture of Cologne was exhibited in the year 1826, it was hung between two portraits, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, of Lady Wallscourt and Lady Robert Manners.

"The sky of Turner's picture was exceedingly bright, and it had a most injurious effect on the colour of the two portraits. Lawrence naturally felt mortified, and complained openly of the position of his pictures. You are aware that artists were at that time permitted to retouch their pictures on the walls of the Academy. On the morning of the opening of the exhibition, at the private view, a friend of Turner's who had seen the Cologne in all its splendour, led a group of expectant critics up to the picture. He started back from it in consternation. The golden sky had changed to a dun colour. He ran up to Turner, who was in another part of the room. 'Turner, *what* have you been doing to your picture?' 'Oh,' mut-

tered Turner, in a low voice, 'poor Lawrence was so unhappy. It's only lamp-black. It'll all wash off after the exhibition!' He had actually passed a wash of lamp-black in water-colour over the whole sky, and utterly spoiled his picture for the time, and so left it through the exhibition, lest it should hurt Lawrence's.

"You may easily find instances of self-sacrifice where men have strong motives, and where large benefits are to be conferred by the effort, or general admiration obtained by it; but of pure, unselfish, and perfect generosity, showing itself in a matter of minor interest, and when few could be aware of the sacrifice made, you will not easily find such another example as this.

"Thus much for his jealousy of his brother artists. You have also heard much of his niggardliness in money transactions. A great part of what you have heard is perfectly true, allowing for the exaggeration which always takes place in the accounts of an eccentric character. But there are other parts of Turner's conduct of which you have never heard; and which, if truly reported, would set his niggardliness in a very different light. Every person from whom Turner exacted a due shilling, proclaimed the exaction far and wide; but the persons to whom Turner gave hundreds of pounds were prevented, by their 'delicacy,' from reporting the kindness of their benefactor. I may however, perhaps, be permitted to acquaint you with one circumstance of this nature, creditable alike to both parties concerned.

"At the death of a poor drawing-master, Mr. Wells, whom Turner had long known, he was deeply affected, and lent money to the widow until a large sum had accumulated. She was both honest and grateful, and after a long period was happy enough to be able to return to her benefactor the whole sum she had received from him. She waited on him with it; but Turner kept his hands in his pocket. 'Keep it,' he said, 'and send your children to school, and to church.' He said this in bitterness; he had himself been sent to neither.

"Well, but you will answer to me, we have heard Turner all our lives stigmatised as brutal, and uncharitable, and selfish, and miserly. How are we to understand these opposing statements?

"Easily. I have told you truly what Turner was. You have often heard what to most people he appeared to be. Imagine what it was for a man to live seventy years in this hard world, with the kindest heart, and the noblest intellect of his time, and never to meet with a single word or ray of sympathy, until he felt himself sinking into the grave. From the time he knew his true greatness, all the world was turned against him: he held his own; but it could not be without roughness of bearing, and hardening of the temper, if not of the heart. No one understood him, no one trusted him, and every one cried out against him. Imagine, any of you,

the effect upon your own minds, if every voice that you heard from the human beings around you were raised, year after year, through all your lives, only in condemnation of your efforts, and denial of your success. This may be borne, and borne easily, by men who have fixed religious principles, or supporting domestic ties. But Turner had no one to teach him in his youth, and no one to love him in his old age. Respect and affection, if they came at all, came unbelieved, or came too late. Naturally irritable, though kind,—naturally suspicious, though generous,—the gold gradually became dim, and the most fine gold changed, or, if not changed, overcast and clouded. The deep heart was still beating, but it was beneath a dark and melancholy mail, between whose joints, however, sometimes the slightest arrows found entrance, and power of giving pain. He received no consolation in his last years, nor in his death. Cut off in great part from all society,—first, by labour, and at last by sickness,—hunted to his grave by the malignities of small critics, and the jealousies of hopeless rivalry, he died in the house of a stranger,—one companion of his life, and one only, staying with him to the last. The window of his death-chamber was turned towards the west, and the *sun* shone upon his face in its setting, and rested there, as he expired."

On the whole, the little volume on which we are commenting is an acceptable present to those who are acquainted with the other works of the same author; but he excels more in shadowing forth principles, and leading the reader to discover them for himself in a variety of detached remarks and illustrations, than in stating them concisely and logically; and from this cause the book is not a very adequate exponent of his peculiar genius. It has, however, one element of popularity in which his previous works have been wanting,—in that it criticises to some extent specific modern structures in England. We heartily commend to all manner of building committees Mr. Ruskin's humorous descriptions of the sixty-six "ideal" lions' heads on the cornice of the Schools of Design at Edinburgh, and of the sculpture on the Army and Navy Club in London, "representing the gentlemen of the Navy as little boys riding upon dolphins."

ART. IV.—GRAY AND MASON.

The Correspondence of Thomas Gray and William Mason : to which are added, some letters addressed by Gray to the Rev. James Brown, D.D., Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge. With Notes and Illustrations by the Rev. John Mitford, Vicar of Benhall. London : Richard Bentley, 1853.

THIS volume of letters adds but little to our previous knowledge of Gray. It consists mainly of the entire body of a correspondence, of which Mason published as much as he thought fit in the memoir of the Poet, given by him to the world soon after his death. It shows him in some relaxation from that stiff propriety in which his first biographer thought it decorous he should appear before the public, and extends a little wider our knowledge of the range of his intimacies. This is not much, but Gray owed enough to art without having his only free utterances dressed up according to Mr. Mason's ideas of true decorum, and it is pleasant to find he is more agreeable in his own costume than in that in which the over anxiety of his friend compelled him to appear. Mason's impression of the responsibilities and duties of an editor was profound and singular. Many men have two characters, the one their own, the other that which they think others ought to believe them to possess. Gray himself was not one of these men, but his biographer deemed it incumbent on himself to represent him as he could have wished him to appear. He therefore altered and suppressed his letters according to his own standard of epistolary merit. The minutiae of this flagrant breach of sense and candour have been sufficiently exposed in a recent number of the *Quarterly Review*, and do not need a recapitulation. It is enough to say that Mason made no scruple of modifying expressions, of omitting and transposing paragraphs, and of compounding one letter out of various extracts culled from originals widely differing in their dates. He suppressed some poems, and supplemented others. When a speech in Gray's Youthful Tragedy of Agrippina is too long,

he, in his own words, "obviates this objection, not by retrenching, but by putting part of it into the mouth of Acronia, and by breaking it in a few other places." He had some thoughts of correcting the inaccuracies of all his author's Latin poems.

"A learned and ingenious person, to whom I communicated them, after they were printed off, was of opinion, that they contain some few expressions not warranted by any good authority; and that there are one or two false quantities to be found in them. I once had an intention to cancel the pages, and correct the passages objected to, according to my friend's criticisms; but, on second thoughts, I deemed it best to let them stand exactly as I found them in the manuscripts. The accurate classical reader will perhaps be best pleased with finding out the faulty passages himself; and his candour will easily make the proper allowances for any little mistakes in verses which he will consider never had the author's last hand."

This he tells us without any hint of the discretion he had exercised in more important matters. And yet he was not without sufficient misgivings to make him willing to destroy the records of his impertinences. He returned Gray's correspondence with Mr. Nicholls to the owner, accompanied by a hint that it should be "so disposed of, as not to impeach the editor's fidelity." The letters which passed between himself and Gray, however, he deemed too valuable to be thus destroyed. Vanity was stronger than caution, and he contented himself with a judicious exercise of the scissors on these and others addressed to two of his most intimate friends. We are apt to imagine that what we have lost had a peculiar value. Possibly it was not so. From some traces that yet remain it is probable that Gray's epistolary wit was occasionally less fastidious than his manners, and though all must join in reprobating the want of nice honesty as well as good sense displayed in Mason's corrections, it must be acknowledged that in the exercise of his legitimate discretionary power of omission he sometimes shows as sound a judgment as the present editor displays in his restorations. Mr. Mitford has resuscitated a number of utterly valueless paragraphs and postscripts. Yet, where we have so little personal record, as in the case of Gray, his superstitious scrupulousness in printing every syllable will most likely be deemed an error in the right direction. Perhaps, too, the

intelligence collected in his notes as to the various persons to whom Gray alludes may have its charm for some readers. The industry employed in this sort of personal antiquarianism is not entirely useless. It clears the field of view for minds of a wider scope, which use it to give precision and accuracy to that more complete and digested narrative, which alone they reproduce for general use. For the world at large, such information as the following, with the notes appended, has no very distinctive attraction. The latter are chiefly valuable as telling us all that is to be learned about people of whom we care to know nothing.

"I am obliged to you for your news; pray send me some more, and better of the sort. I can tell you nothing in return; so your generosity will be the greater;—only Dick* is going to give up his rooms, and live at Ashwell. Mr. Treasurer† sets Sir M. Lamb‡ at nought, and says he has sent him reasons half a sheet at a time; and Mr. Brown attests his veracity as an eye-witness."

Mason first made the acquaintance of Gray in the year 1747, when, through the medium of a friend, he submitted some early poems for his revision. Mason having about this time been made a master of Pembroke Hall, an intimacy sprung up between them, which ripened into a friendship, respectful and solicitous on the part of Mason, good-natured and habitual rather than deep on the side of Gray. The correspondence between them commenced in 1753, on the occasion of a visit by Gray to Durham. At this time Mason was at Hull, attending the death-bed of his father, who appears to have deprived him as far as he could of any interest in the paternal estate, and left him dependent on his hopes of preferment in the Church. Gray was then twenty-six years of age, and already had passed through all the main events of his uneventful life, and written the chief poems on which his fame was to rest. A year before he had returned to Cambridge for the immediate purpose of taking his degree

* Dick is the Rev. Richard Forester, mentioned before, in Letter xix., son of Poulter Forester, Esq. of Broadfield, Herts. He vacated his fellowship at the end of the year 1757, and went to Ashwell in his own county."

† Mr. Joseph Gaskarth was the college treasurer, but the subject of his disagreement with Sir M. Lamb does not appear to be known."

‡ Probably Sir Matthew Lamb, of Brocket Hall, Herts, created a Baronet in 1755; father of the first Lord Melbourne. He died 6 Nov. 1768. See Clutterbuck's Hertfordshire, ii. p. 361."

in Civil Law, and he made Peter House, and afterwards Pembroke Hall, his home for all the remainder of his life, diversifying his monastic life by occasional short tours, and by visits to town and to relations and friends in different parts of England.

Thus he lived until his death, at the age of fifty-four, in 1771, reading with insatiable appetite, amassing vast stores of minute and accurate knowledge in history, classical learning and natural science; studying and daily recording in Latin the state of his feeble health, and writing his pleasant letters to a small circle of intimate acquaintance, the most prominent among whom were Mason, Dr. Wharton, Mr. Nicholls, and Mr. Brown. The only events of any consequence during these twenty-eight years of his life were—the death of his mother in 1753; his refusal of the post of poet-laureate, offered to him in 1757, and afterwards given to Whitehead; and his appointment, with every circumstance that could render it flattering, to the Professorship of Modern History in 1762. The tenor of his life, up to the time when he thus took up his permanent residence at Cambridge, may be dispatched in almost as few words. He was born in December, 1716. His father was a money-scrivener in London. Mr. Mason describes him as of a “reserved and indolent temper;” and adds, that “he was also morose, unsocial, and obstinate:” some of which qualities certainly tinged the character of his son. His mother,—“the careful, tender mother of many children,” was a milliner in Cornhill, of the name of Antrobus. Two of her brothers were ushers at Eton, and to the care of one of them young Thomas Gray was committed for his education at that school. This uncle, Horace Walpole tells us, “took prodigious pains with him,” and “particularly instructed him in the virtues of *simples*.” From Eton he went to Peter House at Cambridge, despised the whole University “infinitely,” and took no degree. In 1739 he accompanied Horace Walpole on a tour through France and Italy, quarrelled with him at Reggio through the confessed fault of Walpole, and returned alone through Venice to England in 1741. In the same year his father died; and soon afterwards declining the solicitations of his mother and aunt that he would avail himself of their resources to study for the Bar in London, he returned, as has been before mentioned, to Cambridge. His early College life was

chiefly distinguished by his friendship with Mr. West, a grandson on the mother's side of Bishop Burnet, and whose father was Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Gray only made two deep friendships in his life, and this was one of them. The letters which passed between them are the letters of clever young men, with a high appreciation of the elevation their literary tastes gave them above those around them. They exchanged early verses, all written in Latin, with the exception of some translations and part of a Tragedy called *Agrippina*, which Gray commenced, but relinquished on the well-founded discouragement of his friend. The correspondence conveys a high idea of the ability, and a still higher of the pleasing character of West. He perished, however, too early to leave more than a faint record of himself. Terrible family distresses wore out a constitution previously inclined to consumption, and he died at a friend's house in Hertfordshire a few months before Gray's return to Cambridge. Gray was at the time staying at Stoke, near Windsor, his mother's residence, and does not seem to have been aware of the precarious tenure of his friend's life. He felt his loss deeply; and it is probably this real grief which tinges with their melancholy feeling the *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton*, and the *Ode to Adversity*, which were both written shortly afterwards. Mr. Mason is disposed to ascribe the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* to the same period and the same influence, though it undoubtedly received its finishing touches some years later. Gray's sonnet on the death of West is that one which was selected for animadversion by Mr. Wordsworth. Yet, however artificial may be the metaphors and diction, it undoubtedly sprang from genuine feeling, and surely the two last lines pathetically express it.

"I fruitless mourn for him that cannot hear,
And weep the more, because I weep in vain."

Certain it is that the memory of his

"Dear lost companion of his tuneful art"

never faded from the breast of Gray, and that as long as he lived the name excited his sad emotion. Mr. Mitford in his preface holds out the agreeable prospect of our being

furnished with some more complete memorial than has hitherto been furnished of the brief career of West.

“ I have still some materials by me which I think will not be unacceptable to the public, partly relating to Gray and partly to those connected with him and his history, that may serve to illustrate what is already published, and complete in some points our acquaintance with the circumstances of his life. It was the intention of Gray to collect and publish the poetical remains of his friend Richard West ; and probably this tablet, inscribed by the hand of friendship, would have given us in words warm from the heart, such a portrait of one whose genius and virtues were laid in too early a tomb, as would have shown from what a rich and copious source the few, but beautiful, remains we possess had sprung, and what might have been expected from him in the maturity of his powers. Why Gray left his design unaccomplished is not known ; but it may be endeavoured, with the assistance of new materials, not indeed to supply the office which he left unfulfilled, but to raise the best monument to the memory of West from his own works which, at so late a period, can be done. Together with these it is proposed to give extracts from a few unpublished manuscripts of Mason, and chiefly from his correspondence with his friends, and some letters from other hands, which may form no unpleasing commentary on the character and writings of Horace Walpole.”

The other friendship of Gray's was one of a somewhat singular and even romantic character, to which Mason in his life makes not the slightest allusion. This omission we can scarcely avoid ascribing to a feeling of jealousy, not entirely out of keeping with some other littlenesses in his character. There is some trace of an unsuccessful application by him for Gray's letters to this friend, but this hardly accounts for the complete absence of any allusion. Near the close of Gray's life, late in the year 1769, there came a young Bernese Swiss to Cambridge, named Charles Von Bonstetten. He obtained an introduction to Gray, and his lively impetuous spirit, his ability, vivacity and openness, seem to have taken the reserved distant temper of the Poet by storm. His faults, of a warm and passionate nature, helped to excite, and keep alive this interest. Gray read with him during his stay at Cambridge, and though he saw him but a few months, conceived a tender attachment for him, and seems to have become more dependent on his society than he ever was

on that of any other man. After his departure he writes letters to him, in which he is betrayed into a warmth of expression more in character with Rousseau than with one whose fastidious reserve and frigid propriety of outward demeanour have often subjected him to the charge of coldness. Yet, even to Bonstetten, Gray never spoke of himself, or emerged from that cloud of reserve in which his inner life was always secluded. We quote from the appendix to Mr. Mitford's book some interesting records of the impressions which the lively young foreigner and the secluded student mutually received of one another. The young square-cap is probably an allusion to Mathison, who was younger than Bonstetten, and with whom he was extremely intimate during his stay at Cambridge.

"Charles von Bonstetten was Baillie of Nion, in the canton of Berne in Switzerland. When young, and his father still alive, he came and resided for a short time at Cambridge. He first appears in a letter to Mr. Nicholls, 6 January, 1770, in which he describes his pursuing his studies with Gray. 'I am in a hurry from morning till evening. At eight o'clock I am roused by a young square-cap, with whom I follow Satan through chaos and night.* He explained me in Greek and Latin "the *sweet, reluctant, amorous delays*" of our grandmother Eve. We finish our travels in a copious breakfast of muffins and tea. Then appear Shakspeare and old Linnæus, struggling together as two ghosts would do for a damned soul. Sometimes the one got the better, sometimes the other. Mr. Gray, whose acquaintance is my greatest debt to you, is so good as to show me Macbeth, and all witches, beldames, ghosts, and spirits, whose language I never could have understood without his interpretation. I am now endeavouring to dress all these people in a French dress, which is a very hard labour. I am afraid to take a room, which Mr. Gray shall keep much better,' &c. To this letter of young Bonstetten Gray has added the following postscript: 'I never saw such a boy; our breed is not made on this model. He is busy from morning to night; has no other amusement than that of changing one study for another; likes nobody that he sees here, and yet wishes to stay longer, though he has passed a whole fortnight with us already. His letter has had no correction whatever, and is prettier by half than English.' In the next letter, March 20, 1770, Gray writes—'On Wednesday next I go (for a few days) with Mons. de Bonstetten to London. His father will have him home in the autumn, and he must pass

* * That is, he read Milton's Paradise Lost."

through France to improve his talents and morals. He goes from Dover on Friday. I have seen (I own) with pleasure the efforts you have made to recommend me to him, *sed non ego credulus illis*, nor, I fear, he neither. He gives me too much pleasure, and at least *an equal share* of inquietude. You do not understand him so well as I do; but I leave my meaning imperfect till we meet. I have never met with so extraordinary a person. God bless him! I am unable to talk to you about anything else, I think.' The 4th April, 1770, P. Hall: 'At length, my dear sir, we have lost our poor De Bonstetten. I packed him up with my own hands in the Dover machine at four o'clock on the morning of Friday, 23rd March. The next day at seven he sailed, and reached Calais at noon, and Boulogne at night. The next night he reached Abbeville, where he had letters to Madame Vanrobais, to whom belongs the famous manufacture of cloth there. From thence he wrote to me; and here am I again to pass my solitary evenings, which hung much lighter on my hands before I knew him. This is your fault! Pray let the next you send be halt and blind, dull, unapprehensive, and wrongheaded. For there (as Lady Constance says) "*was never such a gracious creature born*:" and yet—but no matter. Burn my letter that I wrote you, for I am very much out of humour with myself, and will not believe a word of it. You will think I have caught madness from him (for he is certainly mad), and perhaps you will be right.'"

The following account of his Cambridge visit, published by M. Bonstetten near the close of his long life, and cited by Mr. Mitford, gives a very curious and interesting picture of the intercourse between the two strongly-contrasted friends, and furnishes an appalling representation of the University as it impressed itself on foreign eyes.

"Dix-huit ans avant mon séjour à Nyon, j'avais passé quelques mois à Cambridge avec le célèbre poète *Gray*, presque dans la même intimité qu'avec *Mathison*, mais avec cette différence, que *Gray* avait trente ans plus que moi, et *Mathison* seize de moins. Ma gaieté, mon amour pour la poésie Anglaise, que je *lisait* avec *Gray*, l'avaient comme subjugué, de manière que la différence de nos âges n'était plus sentie par nous. J'étais logé à Cambridge dans un café, voisin du Pembroke Hall. *Gray* y vivait enseveli dans une espèce du cloître, d'où le quinzième siècle n'avait pas encore démenagé. La ville de Cambridge avec ses colleges solitaires n'était qu'une réunion de couvens, où les mathématiques et quelques sciences ont pris la forme et le costume de la théologie du moyen âge. De beaux couvens à longs et silencieux corridors, des solitaires en robes noirs, des jeunes seigneurs travestis en moines, à

bonnets carrés, portant des souvenirs des moines à côté de la gloire de Newton. *Aucune femme honnête ne venait égayer la vie de ces rats de livres à forme humaine.* Le savoir prospérait quelquefois dans le desert du cœur. Tel j'ai en Cambridge en 1769. Quel contraste de habit de Gray à Cambridge avec celle de Mathison à Nyon. Gray, en se condamnant à vivre à Cambridge, oubliait que le génie du poète languit dans la sécheresse du cœur. Le génie poétique de Gray était tellement éteint dans le sombre manoir de Cambridge, *que le souvenir de ses poésies lui étaient odieux. Il ne permit jamais de lui en parler.* Quand je lui citais quelques vers de lui, il se lui fait comme un enfant obstiné. Je lui disais quelquefois, 'Voulez-vous bien me répondre?' Mais aucune parole ne sortait de sa bouche. Je le voyais tous les soirs, de cinq heures à minuit. Nous lisions Shakspeare, qu'il adoroit, Dryden, Pope, Milton, &c.; et nos conversations, comme celle de l'amitié, n'arrivaient jamais à la dernière pensée. Je racontai à Gray ma vie et mon pays; mais toute sa vie à lui était fermée pour moi. *Jamais il ne me parlait de lui.* Il y avait chez Gray, entre le present et le passé, un abîme infranchissable. Quand je voulais un approche, de sombres nuées venaient le couvrir. Je crus que *Gray* n'avait jamais aimé; c'était le mot de l'enigme, et en était résulté une misère de cœur, qui faisait contraste avec son imagination ardente et profonde, que, au lieu de faire le bonheur de sa vie, n'était que le tourment. Gray avait la gaieté dans l'esprit, et de la mélancolie dans le caractère. Mais cette mélancolie n'est qu'un besoin non satisfait de la sensibilité. Chez *Gray* elle tenait au genre de vie de son âme ardente, releguée sous le pôle arctique de Cambridge."

The following letters are not given by Mr. Mitford, but we add them from another source, for the sake of the greater completeness they give to the picture of this intimacy.

"FROM MR. GRAY TO BONSTETTEN.

LETTER I.

"Cambridge, April 12, 1770.

"Never did I feel, my dear Bonstetten, to what a tedious length the few short moments of our life may be extended by impatience, and expectation, till you had left me; nor ever knew before with so strong a conviction how much this frail body sympathizes with the inquietude of the mind. I am grown old in the compass of less than three weeks, like the sultan in the Turkish Tales, that did but plunge his head into a vessel of water and take it out again, as the standers-by affirmed, at the command of a dervise, and found he had passed many years in captivity, and begot a large family of children. The strength and spirits that now enable me

to write to you, are only owing to your last letter—a temporary gleam of sunshine. Heaven knows when it may shine again! I did not conceive till now, I own, what it was to lose you, nor felt the solitude and insipidity of my own condition before I possessed the happiness of your friendship. I must cite another Greek writer to you, because it is much to my purpose: he is describing the character of a genius truly inclined to philosophy: ‘It includes,’ he says, ‘qualifications rarely united in one single mind, quickness of apprehension, and a retentive memory, vivacity and application, gentleness and magnanimity:’ to these he adds an invincible love of truth, and consequently of probity and justice. ‘Such a soul,’ continues he, ‘will be little inclined to sensual pleasures, and consequently temperate; a stranger to illiberality and avarice; being accustomed to the most extensive views of things, and sublimest contemplations, it will contract an habitual greatness, will look down with a kind of disregard on human life and on death; consequently, will possess the truest fortitude. Such,’ says he, ‘is the mind born to govern the rest of mankind.’ But these very endowments, so necessary to a soul formed for philosophy, are often its ruin, especially when joined to the external advantages of wealth, nobility, strength, and beauty; that is, if it light on a bad soil, and want its proper nurture, which nothing but an excellent education can bestow. In this case it is depraved by the public example, the assemblies of the people, the courts of justice, the theatres, that inspire it with false opinions, terrify it with false infamy, or elevate it with false applause; and remember, that extraordinary vices and extraordinary virtues are equally the produce of a vigorous mind: little souls are alike incapable of the one and the other.

“If you have ever met with the portrait sketched out by Plato, you will know it again: for my part, to my sorrow, I have had that happiness: I see the principal features, and I foresee the dangers with a trembling anxiety. But enough of this; I return to your letter. It proves, at least, that in the midst of your new gaieties, I still hold some place in your memory, and, what pleases me above all, it has an air of undissembled sincerity. Go on, my best and amiable friend, to show me your heart simply and without the shadow of disguise, and leave me to weep over it, as I now do, no matter whether from joy or sorrow.”

LETTER II.

“April 19, 1770.

“Alas! how do I every moment feel the truth of what I have somewhere read, ‘Ce n’est pas le voir, que de s’en souvenir!’ and yet that remembrance is the only satisfaction I have left. My life

now is but a perpetual conversation with your shadow—the known sound of your voice still rings in my ears—there, on the corner of the fender, you are standing, or tinkling on the piano-forte, or stretched at length on the sofa. Do you reflect, my dearest friend, that it is a week or eight days before I can receive a letter from you, and as much more before you can have my answer; that all that time I am employed, with more than Herculean toil, in pushing the tedious hours along, and wishing to annihilate them; the more I strive, the heavier they move, and the longer they grow. I cannot bear this place, where I have spent many tedious years within less than a month since you left me. I am going for a few days to see poor N——, invited by a letter, wherein he mentions you in such terms as add to my regard for him, and express my own sentiments better than I can do myself. ‘I am concerned,’ says he, ‘that I cannot pass half my life with him; I never met with any one who pleased and suited me so well: the miracle to me is, how he comes to be so little spoiled, and the miracle of miracles will be, if he continues so in the midst of every danger and seduction, and without any advantages but from his own excellent nature and understanding. I own I am very anxious for him on this account, and perhaps your inquietude may have proceeded from the same cause. I hope I am to hear when he has passed that cursed sea, or will he forget me thus *in insulam relegatum*? If he should, it is out of my power to retaliate.’ Surely you have written to him, my dear Bonstetten, or surely you will! he has moved me with these gentle and sensible expressions of his kindness for you; are you untouched by them?

“You do me the credit, and false or true it goes to my heart, of ascribing to me your love for many virtues of the highest rank. Would to heaven it were so! but they are indeed the fruits of your own noble and generous understanding, which has hitherto struggled against the stream of custom, passion, and ill company, even when you were but a child; and will you now give way to that stream when your strength is increased? Shall the jargon of French sophists, the allurements of painted women *comme il faut*, or the vulgar caresses of prostitute beauty, the property of all who can afford to purchase it, induce you to give up a mind and body by nature distinguished from all others, to folly, idleness, disease, and vain remorse? Have a care, my ever amiable friend, of loving what you do not approve. Know me for your most faithful and most humble despot.

LETTER III.

“May 9, 1770.

“I am returned, my dear Bonstetten, from the little journey I made into Suffolk, without answering the end proposed. The

thought that you might have been with me there has embittered all my hours : your letter has made me happy, as happy as so gloomy, so solitary a being as I am, is capable of being made. I know, and have too often felt, the disadvantages I lay myself under, how much I hurt the little interest I have in you, by this air of sadness, so contrary to your nature and present enjoyments : but sure you will forgive, though you cannot sympathize with me. It is impossible for me to dissemble with you ; such as I am I expose my heart to your view, nor wish to conceal a single thought from your penetrating eyes. All that you say to me, especially on the subject of Switzerland, is infinitely acceptable. It feels too pleasing ever to be fulfilled, and as often as I read over your truly kind letter, written long since from London, I stop at these words : ' *La mort qui peut glacer nos bras avant qu'ils soient entrelacés.*' "

For Mason, Gray, with all his regard, seems to have entertained feelings of a somewhat different nature. There was the most familiar intercourse and the kindest feeling, but without the warmth of friendship. In fact, Mason was not the man to make a friend of ; his extreme deference and solicitous attention to Gray, his ability and wit—for he had a share of both—and his care to exhibit the bright side of his character to one whom he very sincerely respected and loved, made him an agreeable companion to Gray. He was at his ease with him, and habit did much to cement their union. But the two were unequally matched. Gray bends gracefully enough, but his superiority is too palpable not to affect their relative positions. The "dear Mr. Gray" on the one side, and the "Skroddles" on the other, mark nicely enough their sense of one another's claim. "Mr. Mason is my acquaintance," says Gray, writing to Dr. Wharton, in 1748. "I liked that Ode much, but have found no one else that did. He has much fancy, little judgment, and a good deal of modesty ; I take him for a good and well-meaning creature ; but then he is really in simplicity a child, and loves everybody he meets with ; he reads little or nothing, writes abundance, and that with a design to make his fortune by it." In August, 1749, he mentions him again, *apropos* of the Ode he had written on the occasion of the installation of the Duke of Newcastle as Chancellor of the University. "Mason's Ode was the only entertainment that had any tolerable elegance : and for my own part I think it (with some little abatements) uncommonly well on such an occasion. Pray

let me know your sentiments, for doubtless you have seen it. The author of it grows apace into my good graces, as I know him more; he is very ingenious, with great good nature and simplicity; a little vain, but in so harmless and so comical a way, that it does not offend one at all; a little ambitious, but withal so ignorant in the world and its ways, that this does not hurt him in one's opinion; so sincere and so undisguised, that no mind with a spark of generosity would ever think of hurting him, he lies so open to injury; but so indolent, that if he cannot overcome this habit, all his good qualities will signify nothing at all. After all, I like him so well I could wish you knew him." In the course of his letters he adopts towards him a tone on which he never ventures with his other correspondents, and indicates, both in the way in which he banters him directly, and speaks of him to others, that a certain degree of gentle contempt mingled with his undoubted regard. "Pray come and tell me your mind," he writes in one place, "though I know you will be as weary of me as a dog, because I cannot play upon the glasses, nor work joiner's work, nor draw my own picture." "To-morrow," he tells Dr. Brown, "Dr. Gisborne and I go to dine with that reverend gentleman (Mason), at Kensington, during his waiting. He makes many kind inquiries after you, but I see very little of him, he is so taken up with the beaux-arts. He has lately etched my head with his own hand; and his friend Mr. Sandby, the landscape-painter, is doing a great picture with a view of M. Snowdon, the Bard, Edward the First, &c. Now all this I take for a bribe, a sort of hush-money to me, who caught him last year sitting for his own picture, and knew that at this time there is another painter doing one of the scenes in *Elpidæ*." In another place he says "he may be said to have no passions, except a little malice and spitefulness." And indeed Mason does not seem to have proved quite such an innocent as Gray's first impressions represented him. There are always traces of weakness and that degree of foolishness which is rendered obvious by self-sufficiency, but he was one who could make enemies, and was not too scrupulous to attack them. He quarrelled very constantly with his Diocesan, among others, and possessed satirical powers, which he exercised very freely. Gray's account of one of his productions of this

sort, addressed apparently to Lord Chatham, is amusing enough.

"DEAR MASON,—I rejoice to find you are both in health, and that one or other of you at least can have your teeming time: you are wise as a serpent, but the devil of a dove, in timing both your satire and your compliments. When a man stands on the very verge of dissolution, with all his unblushing honours thick upon him; when the gout has nipped him in the bud and blasted all his hopes at least for one winter, then come you buzzing about his nose, and strike your sting deep into the reddest, angriest part of his toe, which will surely mortify. When another has been weak enough in the plenitude of power to disarm himself of his popularity, and to conciliate a court that naturally hates him, submits to be decked in their trappings and fondle their lap dogs, then come you to lull him with your gentlest hum, recalling his good deeds, and hoping what I (with all my old partialities) scarce should dare to hope, if I had but any one else to put my trust in. Let you alone, where spite and interest are in view: ay, ay, Mrs. M. (I see) will be a bishopess.

"Well, I transcribed your wickedness in a print hand, and sent it by last Sunday's post to Dr. Gisborne, with your orders about it, for I had heard St. say that he hoped for a month's respite to go into the North, and did not know but he might be gone. G. was to send me word he had received it, but has not yet done so, and (Lord bless me) who knows but he may be gone into Derbyshire, and the Ode gone after him; if so, mind I am innocent, and meant for the best. I liked it vastly, and thought it very well turned and easy, especially the diabolical part of it. I fear it will not keep, and would have wished the public might have eat it fresh; but, if any untoward accident should delay it, it will be still better than most things that appear at their table."

His friend, too, is constantly jeering at his love of gain, and the charge had enough of truth in it to make it unpleasant. "You are perpetually twitting me about my motive of gain: could I write half as well as Rousseau, I would prove to you that this is the only motive any reasonable man should have in this matter: but pray distinguish the matter. (I mean gain is not my only motive for writing. God forbid it should be.) I write for fame, for posterity, and all sort of fine things, but gain is my only motive for publishing; for I publish to the present age, whom I would fleece, if I could, like any Cossack, Calmuck, or Carcolspeck. Now do you

understand me, and if you do, don't you agree with me?" It is not very easy either to understand or agree with him. At any rate, he is ungrateful to "the present age," which did buy his poems, and in doing so, conferred rather than received an obligation; though this was certainly not Mason's idea. Profoundly impressed with the perfection of the forms of the classical drama, he made a grand discovery of the mode in which a Greek poet, were he now alive, would write "in order to adapt himself to the genius of our times, and the character of our Tragedy." He speaks of "the absurdity of the low superstition, that Shakspeare's deviations from the unities was characteristic of his genius, and worthy of imitation, and proposes to himself to 'soften' the old Drama, sufficiently for the modern taste, without parting with any of the essentials of the Greek method." Accordingly we have the unities, the Chorus, and a due sequence of "Episode," "Exode," and "Peripetia," the whole having, in reality, no Greek character whatever, but being the Romantic drama stripped of its natural adornments, and refitted with a wig of chorus. It is worth while to observe what Gray thought of this matter. Mason, in the defence of his new system, which he prefixed to his Tragedy of Elfrida, had spoken of the departure from the old forms, being an allowance to "modern caprice." To which Gray replies:—

"It is not caprice but good sense that made these alterations in the modern drama. A greater liberty in the choice of the fable and the conduct of it was the necessary consequence of retrenching the Chorus. Love and tenderness delight in privacy. The soft effusions of the soul, Mr. Mason, will not bear the presence of a gaping, singing, dancing, moralising, uninteresting crowd: and not love alone, but every passion, is checked and cooled by this fiddling crew. How could Macbeth and his wife have laid the design for Duncan's murder? What could they have said to each other in the hall at midnight, not only if a chorus but if a single mouse had been stirring there? Could Hamlet have met the Ghost or taken his mother to task in *their* company? If Othello had said a harsh word to his wife before *them*, would they not have danced to the window and called the watch?"

"The ancients were perpetually crossed and harassed by the necessity of using the Chorus, and, if they have done wonders notwithstanding this clog, sure I am they would have performed still greater wonders without it."

Again: -

"Here are we got into our tantarems! It is certain that pure poetry may be introduced without any Chorus. I refer you to a thousand passages of *mere* description in the Iambic parts of Greek tragedies, and to ten thousand in Shakspeare, who is moreover particularly admirable in his introduction of pure poetry, so as to join it with pure passion, and yet keep close to nature. This *he* could accomplish with passions the most violent and transporting, and this any good writer may do with passions less impetuous; for it is nonsense to imagine that tragedy must *throughout* be agitated with the furious passions, or attached by the tender ones: the greater part of it must often be spent in a preparation of these passions, in a gradual working them up to the light, and must thus pass through a great many cooler scenes and a variety of *nuances*, each of which will admit of a proper degree of poetry, and some of the purest poetry. Nay, the boldest metaphors, and even description in its strongest colouring, are the natural expression of some passions, even in their greatest agitation. As to moral reflections, there is sufficient room for them in those cooler scenes that I have mentioned, and they make the greatest ornaments of those parts, that is to say, if they are well joined with the character. If not, they had better be left to the audience than put into the mouths of a set of professed moralists, who keep a shop of sentences and reflections (I mean the Chorus), whether they be sages, as you call them, or young girls that learnt them by heart out of their samples and primers."

Mason has often, however, sweetness and elegance of fancy, and occasional force in satire, but he in general floats down a smooth level of mediocrity, and has left nothing by which he will be kept in memory as a poet by others than the students of literature. As if to show how much he was dependent on the friendly, yet unsparing criticism of Gray, he, after his death, wrote on him one of the worst epitaphs in the English language, with which every visitor to Westminster Abbey is unhappily familiar. Mason's anxious pursuit of Church preferment met with very tolerable recompense. He was early made chaplain to his patron Lord Holderness, and rector of Aston, and became also Residentiary of York Cathedral, Precentor, and Prebendary of Duffield. Gray's account of the Precentor is amusing.

"The Precentor is very hopefully improved in dignity; his scarf sets the fullest about his ears; his surplice has the most the air of

lawn-sleeves you can imagine in so short a time; he begins to complain of qualms and indigestions from repose and repletion; in short, *il tranche du Prelat*. We went twice a-day to church with our vergers and all our pomp."

Again he writes:—

"Mason is Residentiary of York, which is worth near 200*l.* a-year. He owes it to our friend, Fr. Montagu, who is brother-in-law to Dean Fontayne. The precentorship, worth as much more, being vacant at the same time, Lord Holderness has obtained that for him. He may now, I think, wait for the exit with patience, and shut his insatiable repining mouth."

He married in 1765, and his friend as usual seized the occasion to rally him:—

"DEAR MASON,—I rejoice; but has she common sense? Is she a gentlewoman? Has she money? Has she a nose? I know she sings a little, and twiddles on the harpsichord, hammers at sentiment, and puts herself in an attitude, admires a cast in the eye, and can say Elfrida by heart. But these are only the virtues of a maid. Do let her have some wifely qualities, and a double portion of prudence, as she will have not only herself to govern, but you also, and that with an absolute sway. Your friends, I doubt not, will suffer for it. However, we are very happy, and have no other wish than to see you settled in the world. We beg you would not stand fiddling about it, but be married forthwith, and then take chaise, and come * * * * all the way to Cambridge to be touched by Mr. Brown, and so to London, where, to be sure, she must pass the first winter. If good reasons (and not your own nor her coquetry) forbid this, yet come hither yourself, for our copuses and Welsh rabbits are impatient for you."

This lady, to whom Mason seems to have been deeply attached, died shortly afterwards of consumption. Mason seems to have lived chiefly at York and Aston, where he devoted himself to the improvement and care of his garden. He prided himself greatly on his skill in laying out grounds; and, after Gray's death, published a poem called the "English Garden," which his friend's influence had, up to that time, induced him to suppress. He survived Gray many years, dying in 1797. His letters have nothing to recommend them but an occasional liveliness, in which, however, he is apt to give one the impression that he is striving to catch the tone of his correspondent. In 1775, he appears to have been abroad

for a short time, and sent Gray the following evidence that his fame had reached to Hamburg:—

“When I say that Myn Herr —— is the only erudite person whom I have yet seen, I must be understood to mean in this place; for when I lately made a tour to Hamburg I met with another, though of a different sex, her name Madame Belcht, her person I will not attempt to describe, but will endeavour to give you a morceau of her conversation, for I was honoured with it. She asked me who was the famous poet that writ the ‘Nitt Toats;’ I replied Doctor Young. She begged leave to drink his health in a glass of sweet wine, adding that he was her favourite English author. We toasted the Doctor, upon which, having a mind to give my Parnassian toast, I asked Madame Belcht if she had ever read *La petite Elegie dans la Cimetiere Rustique*.^{*} *C’est beaucoup jolie, je vous assure*—for I had said *fort jolie* very often before. *Où, Monsieur*, replied Madame Belcht, *je l’ai lu, et elle est bien jolie et mélancolique. Mais elle ne touche point le cœur, comme mes très chères Nitt Toats.*”

Of Gray’s letters, Horace Walpole says briefly that they “are the best I ever saw, and had more novelty and wit.” They are inferior to his own in many respects, and very much below Cowper’s both in matter and manner. But they have a charm of their own, and are easy, pleasant reading. Gray never thought systematically; and though few men care to embody in their letters the actual processes of inquiry they may be engaged in, an habitually reflective mind will always leave its traces even on these cursory opportunities of expression. But to think continuously was an effort of which Gray was never capable, and his letters contain only the passing reflections of the moment, as the fruits of research and memory. This defect is remarkable in a mind of so much general power. In many men the imagination and the reasoning powers are stunted for the want of sufficient material on which to exercise themselves; they find themselves limited on every side by insufficiency and inaccuracy of knowledge: but in Gray there was a sluggishness of the first spring of action. It was not fuel he wanted, but the kindling flame. His mind seemed to be incapable of putting itself in motion without some strong external stimulus. It required to be excited to action, and relaxed into inactivity as soon as it was left to itself. Hence he required incessant occupation, for within himself he had no resource against

^{*} Gray’s Elegy in a Country Churchyard.

ennui. There was a time when to read was deemed the infallible sign of an active mind, and truly, for that was a time when none but a mind otherwise energetic would be impelled beyond the ordinary range of exercise (then afforded in a much higher degree than now by conversation and affairs) to seek a wider field in books; but these now serve our minds as carriages do our bodies, not to carry us further, but to give us gentle airings without fatigue. Still Gray's appetite was a healthy one; he invariably sought the well-springs of information, and his research was profound, accurate and wide, but never comprehensive in the sense of being guided by any worthy object, or employed in the development of any general principles. Research was to him a mode of passing the hours of life too often rendered weary by the pressure of disease. "To find oneself business," he says in one place, "I am persuaded is the great art of life." This is the tone in which he always speaks of his employments; yet now and then a brief sigh escapes him, as if he felt that by the mere absorption of knowledge he was scarcely fulfilling the true ends of life, and that existence was given for something more than to get through it. If he does reflect for a short space, Gray is always sensible and acute; but apart from criticism he generally takes refuge in gossip and news, the greater part of which has lost its interest; *explicit Pars Poeseus, et incipit Pars Chit-chatices*, is Mason's description of one of his own letters, and it applies to many of Gray's. The account of his early travels is for the most part tedious and uninteresting, as such accounts always are; but he had a genuine and warm love for the beauties of scenery, and his descriptions of his tours in the north of England are the best that such descriptions can be. But at the best these have value only to those who have seen the same scenes and can read them by the light of their own impressions. To others, neither Wordsworth, nor Scott, nor Gray, can make interesting the verbal portrait-painting of landscape.

But that which gives the real charm to these letters is the pleasant delicate vein of humour that is always making itself conspicuous. Mason said very well of Gray's humour, that it was not pure, but mingled with wit and fancy; and though he seemed to consider it necessary to apologise for this as for a defect, the mixture they make is a very pleasing

one. His irony is often so fine and quiet that a hasty reader may easily take it for earnest. He has a quick apprehension of the ludicrous, but loves especially to employ himself with the personal peculiarities of others. We can well understand that the friends of the gentleman whose death he thus described, took some little umbrage at it: "Cambridge is a delight of a place now there is nobody in it. I do believe you would like it, if you knew what it was without inhabitants. It is they, I assure you, who get it an ill name and spoil all. Our friend Dr. Chapman (one of its nuisances) is not expected here again in a hurry. He is gone to his grave with five fine mackarel (large and full of roe) in his belly. He ate them all at one dinner, but his fate was a turbot on Trinity Sunday, of which he left little for the company besides bones. He had not been hearty all the week; but after this sixth fish he never held up his head more, and a violent looseness carried him off. They say he made a very good end." His proposals for printing an account of his travels is infinitely more entertaining than his serious letters on the same subject. The style is not, perhaps, so characteristic as certain passages in his letters, but it gives, in a little space, a better notion of the sort of humour he excelled in than can elsewhere be met with.

"Proposals for printing by subscription, in this large letter, the Travels of T. G. Gentleman, which will consist of all the following particulars:—

"Chap. 1.—The author arrives at Dover; his conversation with the mayor of that corporation; sets out in the packet boat; grows very sick; with a very minute account of all the circumstances thereof; his arrival at Calais; how the inhabitants of that country speak French, and are said to be all Papishes; the author's reflections thereupon.

"Chap. 2.—How they feed him with soupe, and what soupe is; how he meets with a Capucin, and what a Capucin is; how they shut him up in a postchaise and send him to Paris; he goes wondering along during six days, and how there are trees and houses just as in England; arrives at Paris without knowing it.

"Chap. 4.—Goes to the Opera, grand orchestra of humstrums, bagpipes, salt-boxes, tabors, and pipes; the anatomy of a French ear, showing the formation of it to be entirely different from that of an English one, and that sounds have a directly contrary effect upon one and the other. Farinelli at Paris said to have a fine manner, but no voice; a grand ballet, in which there is no seeing

the dance for petticoats, old women with flowers and jewels stuck in the curls of their grey hair, red-heeled shoes, and roll-ups innumerable, hoops and panniers immeasurable, paint unspeakable; tables, wherein is calculated with the utmost exactness the several degrees of red now in use, from the rising blush of an advocate's wife to the flaming crimson of a princess of the blood, done by a limner in great vogue.

"Chap. 5.—The author takes unto him a tailor; his character; how he covers him with silk and fringe, and widens his figure with buckram a yard on each side; waistcoat and breeches so straight he can neither breathe nor walk; how the barber curls him *en béquille* and *à la negligée*, and ties a vast *solitaire* about his neck; how the milliner lengthens his ruffles to his fingers' ends, and sticks his two arms into a muff; how he cannot stir, *and how they cut him in proportion to his clothes*.

"Chap. 6.—He is carried to Versailles; despises it infinitely; a dissertation upon taste; goes to an installation in the *chapelle royale*. Enter the king and fifty fiddlers *solus*. Kettle drums and trumpets, queens and dauphins, princesses and cardinals, incense and the mass, old knights making curtsies, holy ghosts and fiery tongues.

"Chap. 7.—The author goes into the country to Rheims in Champaign; stays there three months; what he did there (he must beg the reader's pardon, but) has really forgot.

"Chap. 8.—Proceeds to Lyons; the vastness of that city (cannot see the streets for houses), how rich it is, and how much it stinks. A poem upon the confluence of the Rhone and the Saone, by a friend of the author's, very pretty.

"Chap. 9.—Makes a journey into Savoy, and in his way visits the Grand Chartreuse; he is set astride upon a mule's back, and begins to climb up the mountain, rocks and torrents beneath, pine-trees and snows above; horrors and terrors on all sides. The author dies of the fright.

"Chap. 10.—He goes to Geneva; his mortal antipathy to a Presbyterian, and the cure for it; returns to Lyons; gets a surfeit with eating ortolans and lampreys; is advised to go into Italy for the benefit of the air.

"Chap. 11.—Sets out the latter end of November to cross the Alps; he is devoured by a wolf, and how it is to be devoured by a wolf. The seventh day he comes to the foot of Mount Cenis. How he is wrapped up in bearskins and beaverskins, boots on his legs, caps on his head, muffs on his hands, and taffety over his eyes; he is placed on a bier, and is carried to heaven by the savages blind-fold.

"Chap. 12.—He arrives at Turin, goes to Genoa, and from thence to Placentia; crosses the river Trebbia; the ghost of Han-

nibal appears to him ; and what it and he says upon the occasion ; locked out of Parma, in a cold winter's night ; the author by an ingenious stratagem gains admittance ; despises them and that city, and proceeds through Reggio to Modena. How the duke and duchess lie over their own stables, and go every night to a vile Italian comedy ; despises them and it, and proceeds to Bologna."

Notwithstanding his fastidiousness, however, his wit is not always quite conformable to the rules of decency. When Lord Sandwich stood for the office of High Steward of the University, Gray opposed him by all the influence in his power, and vented the feelings of enmity which his character not undeservedly excited by a lampoon, which, in humour and bitterness of sarcasm on Lord Sandwich's reverend supporters, far surpasses anything else he ever wrote ; but whose coarseness puts it beyond the pale of ordinary perusal. Nor did he himself ever venture to publish it. It describes the candidate as a lover coming a-wooing to the three Faculties at Cambridge :—

"When sly Jemmy Twitcher had smuggled up his face,
With a lick of court whitewash and pious grimace,
A wooing he went, where three sisters of old
In harmless society guttle and scold."

Physic and Law, though not very particular, decline to venture on so questionable a match ; but Divinity, scoffing at their niceness, defends all his vices by Scripture examples, and declares her willingness to be Mrs. Twitcher herself. Mason suppressed this production, but Horace Walpole, who cared nothing for a breach of good manners in such matters, thought its ability far more than compensated for the discredit it does to the good taste of its author, and placed an extravagant value on it. In general, Gray's poetical *jeux d'esprit* are very inferior to what one would look for. "That beautiful one on a cat of Mr. Walpole's, drowned in a tub of gold fishes," probably owed this tribute to the fact of its coming from the cat's master. Had its author written more poetry than he did, this trifle would have met with deserved neglect. The same is true of the Long Story ; the smoothness of its cadence, its happy rhymes, and the easy lively wit that plays over it, ought to have made it the *chef d'œuvre* of Lady Schaub's album, where it might well

have rested; and Gray himself had the good sense to reject it, in the collection he made of his own poems. The lines he sent Mason (apparently on hearing of his design to edit Shakspeare) are not much better, but they are more new, and we can afford to read everything Gray wrote. "As bad as your verses were, they were yours," says Mason. Modern commentators, too, may possibly take a hint from them.

"WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE to MRS. ANNE. Regular Servant to the
REV. MR. PRECENTOR, of York.

"A moment's patience, gentle Mistris Anne:
(But stint your clack for sweet St. Charitie)
'Tis Willey begs, once a right proper man,
Though now a book, and interleav'd you see.
Much have I borne from canker'd critic's spite,
From fumbling baronets, and poets small,
Pert barristers, and parsons nothing bright:
But what awaits me now is worst of all.
'Tis true, our master's temper natural
Was fashion'd fair in meek and dove-like guise;
But may not honey's self be turn'd to gall
By residence, by marriage, and sore eyes?
If then he wreak on me his wicked will,
Steal to his closet at the hour of prayer;
And (when thou hear'st the organ piping shrill)
Grease his best pen, and all he scribbles, tear.
Better to bottom tarts and cheesecakes nice,
Better the roast meat from the fire to save,
Better be twisted into caps for spice,
Than thus be patch'd and cobbled in one's grave.
So York shall taste what Clouet never knew,
So from our works sublimer fumes shall rise;
While Nancy earns the praise to Shakspeare due,
For glorious puddings and immortal pies."

"Tell me if you do not like this," says Gray at the end,
"and I will send you a worse."

Of his serious poems, the *Elegy* alone was received with general applause during his lifetime, and alone will secure his reputation. It was published by Dodsley in 1751, and before very long passed through eleven editions. Few poems have enjoyed such universal and constant attention. It is popular because the sentiments and ideas are level to

universal comprehension, and it is full of tender feeling, expressed with exquisite finish of diction and harmony of verse, and with greater simplicity of language than is to be found in his other poems: for Gray often loses by the over-anxious care he bestowed on the verbal clothing of his conceptions.

In the highest mode of poetical imagination, the language and the idea are united like body and spirit, and the poet would find it hard to say which suggested the other; the whole springs complete from the forming mind, and is incapable of correction; in a second and lower mode, the mind is occupied by some vivid conception, or haunted by some image of beauty: it yearns to express it, to give it outward form and utterance—it ponders over the capacities of language, and revolves all its subtle analogies to find the true outward vestiture, which shall body forth in words to itself and others the very thing which thus possesses the imagination. Mason's poetical power (such as it was) worked in this manner. He *had* creative impulse—ideas and fancies did visit him and call for expression. But they were neither of a high order nor took a firm hold upon him. He possessed neither patience nor a conscientious artistic feeling. He had few fine conceptions to be true to, and cared little to be true to such as he had. His habits of poetical composition betray his indolence and indifference to a high standard. His thoughts, as those of any man will do with a little practice, readily flowed into verse, and his custom was to write down what occurred to him, in such language and rhythm as came readiest to hand, and to preserve this rough and hasty sketch for future correction. In one place he speaks of the practice ascribed to Racine of writing out his plays in prose before he put them in verse, and is persuaded that, had he written in English, he would have availed himself of blank verse for this purpose. He is very much mistaken. The same practice has been ascribed to several eminent dramatic writers; but their object was not to have a crude first sketch to be part used, part rejected, and by degrees patched and cobbled into a poem; they desired to fix and give definiteness and precision to the conception which was to obtain poetical expression from another and different effort. Thus their system is the very reverse of his own. The one requires to build a framework of thought

before it ventures on the execution, the other hastens to execution before either the thoughts or the form they should bear have been adequately conceived. Gray saw clearly the defectiveness of Mason's mode of composing, and animadverted on it, but it was too natural a result from the whole cast of his mind, for him to be capable of relinquishing it. The instance that called for Gray's stricture affords in itself a curious enough specimen of Mason's careless facility alike in producing and abandoning his poetical offspring. Hot from the perusal of a fresh book, Keyser's "*Antiquitates Selectæ, Septentrionales et Celticæ*," he writes an ode, and, as usual, sends it straight away to his friend to receive a pruning and polishing from his hand. He has misgivings whether the whole thing is not wrong—whether "this sort of imagery may be employed. Will its being Celtic make it Druidical? If it will not, burn it; if it will, why scratch it *ad libitum*, and send it me back as soon as possible." Gray writes back, in his bantering way, with an indolent, easy contempt, softened by humour and affection—

"DEAR MASON,—Why you make no more of writing an Ode, and throwing it into the fire, than of buckling and unbuckling your shoe. I have never read Keyser's book, nor you neither, I believe; if you had taken that pains, I am persuaded you would have seen that his Celtic and his septentrional antiquities are two things entirely distinct."

After twitting him with filling his Ode with old German mythology and imagery instead of Celtic, he goes into some minutiae of criticism, and ends with his protest against Mason's practice of *drafting* his poems.

"Now for particulars. I like the first stanza; the image of Death in arms is very fine and gallant, but I banish 'free-born train,' and 'glory and luxury' here (not the ideas, but the words), and 'liberty and freedom's cause,' and several small epithets throughout. I do not see how one person can *lift* the voice of another person. The imagery of the second stanza too is excellent. A dragon *pecks*! why a cock-sparrow might do as much: in short, I am pleased with the Gothic Elysium. Do not think I am ignorant about either that, or the *hell* before, or the *twilight*. I have been there, and have seen it all in Mallet's Introduction to the History of Denmark (it is in French), and many other places. 'Now they charge,' &c., looks as if the coursers rode upon the men.

A ghost does not fall. These are all my little objections, but I have a greater. Extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical, is one of the grand beauties of lyric poetry; this I have always aimed at, and never could attain; the necessity of rhyming is one great obstacle to it: another and perhaps a stronger is, that way you have chosen of casting down your first ideas carelessly and at large, and then clipping them here and there, and forming them at leisure; this method, after all possible pains, will leave behind it in some places a laxity, a diffuseness; the frame of a thought (otherwise well invented, well turned, and well placed) is often weakened by it. Do I talk nonsense, or do you understand me? I am persuaded what I say is true in my head, whatever it may be in prose,—for I do not pretend to write prose.”

Mason is a little hurt. He *has* read Keyser. The notion of keeping a bad ode as part material for some future good one is quite in character.

“DEAR SIR,—I believe you are quite right, as you always are in these matters. But it is a little hard upon my no-reading to believe I have not read Keyser. I have, I assure you, and he led me into the mistake. * * * But Sir William Temple set me right about the low date of these ideas, before I received yours; I have therefore laid aside the Ode, and shall make no use of it at all, except perhaps the image of the ‘armed Death,’ which is my own, and neither Scaldic nor Runic. And as to this nasty German, Keyser, who led me to take all this trouble, I will never open him again. The fool was a Fellow of the Royal Society—what could one expect better from him? But, after all, I do wish indeed that these Odes were all of them finished; and yet, by what you talk of ‘measure, and rhythm, and expression,’ I think I shall never be able to finish them,—never certainly at all if I am not to throw out my ideas at large; so, whether I am right or wrong, I must have my way in that: therefore talk no more about it.”

The process which the much-admired Epitaph on Archbishop Drummond underwent in its development, is the culmination of this mode of manufacturing poetry. Gray had sent the original cast home, with a number of special and some more general criticisms, and Mason throws it back on his hands, in the following characteristic manner:—

“However, to show you my complacency, and in dread that you should ever do as you threaten, and call whatever I send you the most perfect things in nature, I will sacrifice the first stanza on

your critical altar, and let it consume either in flame or smudge as it choose. Then we begin, 'here sleeps,' a very poetical sort of *ci git*, or 'here lies,' and which I hope will not lead the reader to imagine a sentence lost.

- " 1. Here sleeps what once was beauty, once was grace,
2. Grace that with native sentiment combined
3. To form that harmony of soul and face,
4. Where beauty shines the mirror of the mind.
5. Such was the maid, that, in the noon of youth,
6. In virgin innocence, in nature's pride,
7. Blest with each art that taste supplies or truth,
8. Sunk in her father's fond embrace and died.
9. He weeps. O! venerate the holy tear;
10. Faith lends her aid to ease affliction's load:
11. The parent mourns his child upon her bier,
12. The Christian yields an angel to his God.

" Various sections, pick and choose.

" 2. 'Inborn sentiment.'

" 3. 'Displayed (or diffused) that harmony,' &c.

" 7. 'That springs from taste or truth;' 'derived from taste or truth;' 'that charms with taste and truth.' But, after all, I do not know that she was a metaphysician, 'blest with each art that owes its charms to truth,' which painting does, as well as logic and metaphysics.

" 10. 'Faith lends her lenient aid to sorrow's load;' 'Faith lends her aid, and eases (or lightens) sorrow's load.'

" 11. 'Pensive he mourns,' or 'he views' or 'gives.'

" 12. 'Yet humbly yields,' or 'but humbly.'

" Now if from all this you can pick out twelve ostensible lines, do, and I will father them; or if you will out of that lukewarm corner of your heart where you hoard up your poetical charity throw out a poor mite to my distresses, I shall take it kind indeed; but, if not, *stat prior sententia*, for I will give myself no further trouble about it; I cannot in this uncomfortable place, where my *opus magnum sive didacticum* has not advanced ten lines since I saw you."

Gray's own method of composition was the exact reverse of that employed by Mason. He perfected every line as he wrote it, and never passed forward until he had succeeded in satisfying his own difficult requisitions of the excellence of that which went before. He wrote little pieces at a time, and added them up into a poem like a sum in arithmetic. Hence that want of continuity and amalgamation of parts which all nice observers detect in his poetry. The details

are finished and ill put together; and not only this, but the larger sections of the poem are again ill cemented, and the whole becomes deficient in consistency and keeping. The poet not only works in mosaic, but too often on a confused outline. Yet these poems have a unity.

"There is," he says himself, in one of his manuscript papers, "a *tout ensemble* of sound as well as of sense in poetical composition always necessary to its perfection. What is gone before still dwells upon the ear, and insensibly harmonizes with the present line, as in that succession of fleeting notes which is called melody." Gray's own poetry shows a nice appreciation of this truth. What is more important, his pieces possess in general, in spite of their patchwork character as to ideas and composition, real unity of feeling. And to this they owe a great part of their charm. The subdued evening pensiveness of the Elegy, the dejection of spirit that breathes in the Ode on a distant prospect of Eton College, the fervour that pervades the Bard, leaves some degree of singleness of impression, in spite of the laborious dove-tailing of which they everywhere bear the traces. These poems bear something the same relation to what poetry should be, that a stained glass window does to a painting; we admire it for the brilliancy of its colours and the harmony of its tints, and are content to forgive its broken parts, and the irregularity and insignificance of its designs.

Gray's habits of writing were closely connected with his fundamental impressions as to the poetical art. In several passages in his letters he lays great stress on "expression," but he by no means attached the same ideas to the word that we modern readers are apt to do. A modern critic has told us that architecture consists in ornamentation. Every building must be well adapted to the purpose it is intended to answer—that is the first thing; and being so designed, the art steps in to beautify it. This is just Gray's idea of poetry. He considered it the art of adorning a thought. An idea with him was a nucleus around which to collect language; the iron wire which formed the skeleton of his basket of glittering crystals. He justly thought it essential that his meaning should be clearly expressed, and his image adequately conveyed; but this once achieved, it still remained to adorn it with select similes, choice epithets, and harmonious syllables, chosen for their own sakes, and not

that they were required to clothe the poet's imaginations. Words *are* something more than the mere vehicles of thought; but if their independent qualities of form and sound afford new phases of beauty, and open wider fields to the imagination, they render them at the same time instruments more difficult to handle, and make them powers less easy to be subordinated. And it may be said that Gray was less the master of language than language was the master of Gray. Yet the genius of a poet is shown in his command over the instruments of his art. It is this which distinguishes him from those who can imagine yet cannot reproduce. It is an interior conception of his own which he should oblige language to vivify, and the haunting associations and suggestions of their own which words bring with them are valuable to him only as they enable him to image forth that conception with greater force and a more absolute completeness. One of the worst features in modern poetry is a tendency to write word-poetry, that is, poetry depending mainly on the beauty of sound, form, and association in words. Tennyson has, perhaps, had a finer and subtler appreciation of this sort of beauty than any poet who ever lived, and has availed himself of it most successfully to convey a certain class of impressions, especially those which are aroused by the contemplation of particular aspects of nature. His followers have seen half way into the secret of his power, and endeavour to grasp his means, without caring to have anything to convey—like a painter who neglects his subject for the sake of the brightness of his colours; and even their master cannot always resist the temptation of allowing some notes to be heard for their own sweetness instead of for that which they contribute to, the harmony of the whole. It is one of Wordsworth's highest merits that he is invariably direct and clear. He knows definitely what he has to say, and is led astray by nothing from the all-important object of saying it. He is eminently a poet of ideas, not of words. His excellence in this respect arises largely, however, from the absence of temptation, and he pays the ordinary penalty of losing something in power for what he gains in correctness. It is only occasionally that his poetry has the exquisite charm which a true use of the secondary beauties of language affords; and his wants in this respect would be more felt

were it not that his conceptions are rarely complex. In some great poets, especially in Shakspeare, there is an opposite leaning to that of which we have been speaking. So vivid is his conception, so overpowering his necessity to give it perfect form, that he seizes on the associative power of words almost independently of their direct sense, and leaves his meaning to rest in great measure on the atmosphere that hangs about his language, rather than on its dictionary meaning and grammatical construction. Thus an imaginative girl understands and cannot explain while the learned commentators explain but cannot understand—

"Violets dim
And sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cythera's breath."

Violets dim, says one, from their light blue colour; from lying half concealed in their foliage, says another; as if the value of the word did not depend on the impossibility of conveying the idea in any other form, and as if it were not in itself untranslatable, inexplicable, and all in all sufficient for any mind worthy to read it. So we have—

"Heaven's cherubim
Horsed on the sightless couriers of the air."

And even the self-controlled Milton speaks of

"Soothing the raven down
Of Darkness till it smiles."

Gray, as a poet, may be said to have studied words more carefully than the things they represent. He looked on a lay figure of nature. He had no thronging imaginations which required the vent of verse. He went abroad in search of ideas, and brought them home to amplify and adorn them. If the beauty of a word or a phrase struck him, he worked it into his general design as best he could—he could not afford to omit it. His imagination was at once vivid and sterile. He possesses isolated passages of remarkable force and beauty, and never sinks below a certain level; but among the most remarkable characteristics of his mind, was an almost utter absence of creative or reproductive power, and an overpowering occupation by minutiae. Nothing came

from him spontaneously. "If I do not write much, it is because I cannot." His poetry was wrung out drop by drop, with an effort which soon became too great for his indolent nature. A life of moderate length sufficed only to produce a number of lines, which must be printed large to occupy thirty octavo pages, and from these six or seven must be deducted for translations. His love of detail showed itself, not only in his minute attention to small points of criticism, but in the whole choice of his studies. In history, he was a chronologist and genealogist; in art, an antiquarian; and in natural history, devoted to nomenclature and the cataloguing of trivial observations. During the chief part of his life, he "kept a *daily* record of the blowing of flowers, the leafing of trees, the state of the thermometer, the quarter from which the wind blew, and the falling of rain; these he entered into his pocket journals, in his delicate and correct handwriting, with the utmost precision, and sometimes into a naturalist's calendar in addition." Mr. Mitford tells us:—

"Gray's copy of Verral's Book of Cookery, 8vo, 1759, is in my possession, and is enriched by numerous notes in his writing, with his usual minute diligence, and remarks on culinary subjects, arranging the subjects of gastronomy in scientific order. 1st. List of *furniture* necessary for a kitchen, which he classes under twelve heads. 2ndly. List of such receipts as are primarily necessary in forming essential ingredients for *others*, all accurately indexed to their respective pages. 3rdly. Five pages of receipts for various dishes, with the names of the inventors."

It is this over-balanced interest in details, acting under the influence of a highly-refined apprehension of beauty and fitness, that constitutes the peculiarity of Gray's poetry. He is the master of polished diction. Each separate particle of his poems has often force and exquisite beauty, but always finished propriety and perfect fitness of parts; the choice of words is at once remote from sameness and from singularity; and the rhythm steers a delicate medium at once remote from a dead level of smoothness, and from any approach to ruggedness. We read each period with delight, and are contented to seek our satisfaction in the perfection of each isolated part, without caring to observe that they are artificially connected, and that the poem itself is weak and objectless.

It is true that Gray's taste, though refined, is far from faultless, and was allowed too deliberate and cold-blooded a control over his imagination. Every phrase and every word was brought up for judgment, and condemned or accepted on grounds often too remote from the real conditions of the art. He made fancy fetch and carry for criticism, and fastened on his epithets like the spangles on an actor's dress. Yet it may be doubted whether his genius would have distinguished him apart from the nice perceptions of his taste. It may have been sometimes cramped by too arbitrary a control, but it scarcely possessed energy sufficient to be a law unto itself.

It is curious that, with his habits of mind, he should have become famous for obscurity of expression. It is a fact that can only be accounted for by the subordinate place he gave to sense compared with sound. He would at any time prefer to be incomprehensible rather than to repeat an epithet in the same poem. His allusions are sometimes too remote to be followed; at others, too general to be identified. The conclusion of the prophecy of the Bard affords a remarkable instance of the latter defect.

"The verse adorn again
Fierce War, and faithful Love,
And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest;
In buskined measures move
Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.
A voice, as of the cherub-choir,
Gales from blooming Eden bear:
And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
That lost in long futurity expire."

Gray grudged his readers a note to inform them that Pale Grief and pleasing Pain, moving in buskined measures, was a special reference to Shakspeare, and that the voice, as of a cherub-choir borne from Eden, was that of Milton. In default of such information, fierce War, if it is to embody a like specific allusion, may mean anybody, from Fairfax to Marlborough, and Truth severe by fairy Fiction drest, may allude to the Fairy Queen or Rasselas, or any intermediate composition that answers to this wide description. That, in his secret heart, he was aware of the obscurity of some of his allusions and (though he makes a joke of it) that he was not entirely displeased at the idea that it should require

learning to appreciate him, appears in a passage of one of his letters to Walpole. "I don't know but I may send him [Dodsley] very soon (by your hands) an ode to his own tooth, a high Pindaric upon stilts, which one must be a better scholar than he is to understand a line of, and the very best scholars will understand but a little matter here and there. It wants but seventeen lines of having an end. I don't say of being finished." This seems to be an allusion to his ode on the Progress of Poetry, on which one of his critics sententiously observes, that "being one of those that are willing to be pleased, he would therefore gladly find the meaning of the first stanza."

The peculiar trait of his fancy is to use allegory for the purposes of metaphor, and he pushes his personification so far that the original meaning is often lost by the complete occupation of the reader's mind with the substituted image. A poet with a true instinct, however vivid may be the personality he assumes for inanimate objects, softens his image into unison with the actual impression he wishes to convey, by the vagueness of the accompanying conceptions playing upon the borders of the real and the assumed, and mingling the shades of metaphor and description. So Milton tells us that the moon—

" Apparent Queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw."

Gray would have said she unveiled her peerless face, and clothed the form of Darkness in her silver mantle, or otherwise have conveyed the impression of a black man in a white cloak. He constantly has such images as "Gay Hope by Fancy fed," which suggests spoon-meat irresistibly. But it is easier to find defects in Gray's poems than to deny the attraction they possess both for the popular and the cultivated mind. He cannot be said to have had a great imagination, but the strength and vividness of his fancy were remarkable, and his inspirations, though rare, flashed forth with vigour when they did come. His mode of speaking of these visits is worth noting, as embodying a truth to which, we suppose, every real and self-observant poet would be a witness. "I by no means pretend to inspiration; but yet I affirm that the faculty in question is by no means voluntary; it is the result (I suppose) of a certain disposition of mind which

does not depend on oneself, and which I have not felt this long time. You, that are a witness how seldom this spirit has moved me in my life, may give credit to what I say." Hereupon, the matter-of-fact Dr. Johnson, who made poetry by pure effort of diligence, as a man casts up his ledger, observes: "He had a notion, not very peculiar, that he could not write, but at certain times, or at happy moments, a fantastic foppery, to which my kindness for a man of learning and virtue wishes him to have been superior."

The character of Gray has received abundance of discussion, and some have been puzzled to understand how one so formal and distant in his demeanour, and so reserved in his temper, should have formed the subject of several such warm attachments as Gray undoubtedly did. Even Horace Walpole's frigid and artificial nature warmed towards him, and after their quarrel abroad he almost forced upon Gray a reconciliation and renewal of their intimacy, though he could not effect a return of friendship. But reserve is far from having a necessary tendency to deprive a man of the friendship of others. Most men prefer to repose their own confidences rather than to receive those of others. It conceals, too, the variations of temper which often impair the ease and pleasantness of intercourse. Nor was Gray disqualified by coldness of heart. Coldness of temperament he undoubtedly had in a very remarkable degree. His only strong passion was pride. No woman seems ever to have excited even a transient interest in his heart, and his complete deprivation of the multitude of opening and softening influences that he experienced through no other channel accounts for much that is peculiar and deficient in him. But though his temper was cold and his nature passionless, he had affections which, when once awakened, were deep, tender and lasting. Some have judged the expressions contained in his letters as they would those of one whose every feeling found a ready vent; but when read as what they truly were, the almost accidental escape of emotions he would gladly have concealed altogether, their testimony is entitled to a very different weight. He never seeks consolation for himself nor imparts his own sorrows; it is only when rendering the affectionate tribute of his sympathy to the grief of another that he makes any allusion to his own experience. On the death of West and of his mother he writes to no one, and it

is only in the change of his countenance when their names are mentioned, years after, that his nearest friends learn how faithful is his memory. Writing to Mr. Nicholls on the occasion of the illness of his friend's mother, he tells him it was not until too late he made the discovery that in one's whole life one never can have but a single mother. "It is thirteen years ago, and seems but yesterday; and every day I live it sinks deeper into my heart." Many have felt the truth that grief, while it seems to be running away like a river, only makes its channel deeper and more permanent. In another passage he has a just remonstrance against seeking relief in distraction. "Time," he says, "by the appointment of the same Power, will cure the smart, and in some hearts soon blot out all the traces of sorrow; but such as preserve them longest, for it is left partly in our own power, do perhaps best acquiesce in the will of the Chastiser." The tenderness and simplicity with which he writes to Mr. Stenhewer on the death of his father might alone suffice to set at rest the question whether he had a feeling heart.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am sincerely pleased with every mark of your kindness, and as such I look upon your last letter in particular. I feel for the sorrow you have felt, and yet I cannot wish to lessen it; that would be to rob you of the best part of your nature, to efface from your mind the tender memory of a father's love, and deprive the dead of that just and grateful tribute which his goodness demanded from you.

"I must, however, remind you how happy it was for him that you were with him to the last; that he was sensible, perhaps, of your care, when every other sense was vanishing. He might have lost you the last year, might have seen you go before him, at a time when all the ills of helpless old age were coming upon him, and, though not destitute of the attention and tenderness of others, yet destitute of *your* attention and *your* tenderness. May God preserve you, my best friend, and, long after my eyes are closed, give you that last satisfaction in the gratitude and affection of a son, which you have given your father.

"I am ever most truly and entirely yours.—T. G."

Though the most reserved of men he did not affect the absolute retirement in which he is generally conceived as living. It is common to imagine him delicate, fastidious,

shrinking from every eye, without an interest beyond his books, and immured in the seclusion of his chambers—"the melancholy Gray." This is a very one-sided view. He was subject indeed to low spirits, and hated the demands and restraints of general society; but he took a lively interest in the affairs of men, and entered with zeal into some of the contests of his College and of the University. He never passed an entire twelvemonth without leaving Cambridge; and after the first few years of his residence, he visited London every year, often more than once; and at one time spent the greater part of two years at a lodging in Southampton-row, availing himself of the resources of the British Museum, then lately opened to the public. He went to the House of Commons, the Coronation, and other public sights, but never seems to have enlarged the circle of his intimacies, or to have mixed in general society. When in company with other than his friends he would maintain complete silence, and often affected a fastidiousness which made him obnoxious and troublesome. He was precise and finikin in his habits and dress, with a punctilious and minute regard to neatness and arrangement. His health was weak, and he occupied himself much with it; but these matters must not be taken to indicate effeminacy or weakness: on the contrary, he was remarkable for strength and independence of character. It required some self-reliance for a young man fresh from school to indulge so unmodified a contempt as he did for the whole University into which he was admitted, to isolate himself so completely, and to decline to take his degree. Pride was his master-passion, softened indeed by the indolence and goodness of his nature, but sometimes taking the form of contempt, especially for his inferiors in attainments. From his little College rooms, with his tiny income and complete social exclusion, he looked down with an easy satisfied air on the world below, not caring to compare himself, but indulging almost unconsciously, and without any danger of misgiving, a temperate sense of superiority to the herd. The vigour of his mind is shown, not only in the acuteness and soundness of his judgment whenever he chose to exert it, but in his vast powers of retention, which have rarely been equalled and never so much wasted. The whole range of History is said to have

been familiar to him, and his knowledge in genealogy, heraldry, and general antiquarianism, to have been extensive and accurate: botany and zoology he exhausted as far as the limits of science then went: "Criticism, metaphysics, morals, politics, made a principal part of his studies; voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite amusement, and he had a fine taste in painting, prints, architecture, and gardening." Possibly, however, as he rarely tested his resources, his friends may have given him credit for more than he actually possessed.

"To be employed is to be happy," was a phrase of his, which has been repeated *ad nauseam* by his friends and biographers, who seem to have considered it his finest saying. It is a common-place at the best, and, in the narrow sense in which he used it, scarcely a true one. The mere acquisition of information, even though unaccompanied by the neglect of immediate duties, neither meets the demands of conscience, nor supplies the requisites of enjoyment. A man so employed differs from the miser only in the superior value of the matter on which his acquisitive talent is employed, and he benefits the world as little or less, for he does not leave his hoard behind him. Gray might have advanced the limits and increased the certainty of any branch of science to which he devoted himself. He chose to leave no human being one whit the wiser or better for his having been perhaps the most widely and accurately informed man of his day. Into his religious character and opinions we have no means of penetrating. He appears to have believed steadily according to the received opinions of his day, without caring to push his inquiries. There is a somewhat remarkable passage of Middleton's quoted by Gray in one of his letters, in which he draws attention to the fact that the defence of Christianity may be rested on two lines of defence—that which appeals to the holiness of its doctrines, and that which bases itself on the external evidence of miracles. The former, he says, from the difficulty of managing it, has been neglected, while the latter, he thinks, is valueless, if not dangerous to the faith it is meant to support. Gray passes this by with the contemptuous remark—"It is easy to see where this leads to." He was prudent and exact in the management of his small finances, and had something to spare for

the claims of charity. On the whole, if he appear to have been a man of few temptations and few active virtues, it is well to remember that though more richly endowed men may excite more interest, and fill a larger space in the eye of the world, it is given to every man to solve for himself, and within his own limits, the problem of life.

ART. V.—LESSING'S THEOLOGY AND TIMES.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing als Theologe. Dargestellt von Carl Schwarz, ausserord. Professor der Theologie an der Universität Halle. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Theologie im 18ten Jahrhundert. Halle: C. E. M. Pfeffer. 1854.

FROM long-standing recollections, we cannot but feel a certain fascination hang around the name of Lessing. Our earliest impressions of German literature were from him. We well remember hearing the eccentric William Taylor of Norwich read a scene or two from "Nathan the Wise," with the peculiar pomp of elocution and artifice of rhythm, which, though most akin to his paradoxes of thought, could assume dignity and sweetness when penetrated by his humaner feeling. Nor shall we ever forget the wonder and delight, the awful sense of intellectual *space*, brought to us by the grand essay on the "Education of Human Kind." No one, probably, could fall upon it in the eager season of inquiry and conviction, without being haunted for years by the shadows of great thought it flings around him, and returning again and again to its pregnant sentences, lest something of their terse significance should still be lost. And so little is this estimate of its *fulness* an illusion, that we doubt whether any one, recurring to it after a considerable interval of self-culture, ever failed to find what had escaped him before, and to interpret anew what he had seemed to read with open eye. Yet Lessing was no mystagogue, working up indeterminate thoughts into enigmatical oracles; but a man of sharply-discriminating vision, and faculty of expression peculiarly clear and firm.

An interest, in fact, attaches to Lessing quite independent of any accidents of personal obligation to him; and the monograph of Professor Schwarz does well to single out his figure from the groups around him, and place it in front of the last century's theologic history. Not that we find in him either of the two chief sources of intellectual repute and influence;—intensity of genius to mould his age into likeness

of himself; or sequacious sympathy with its spirit to make him its favourite interpreter. In every department of human culture his superior may be found without searching beyond the limits of his own times; Ernesti in erudition, Semler and Michaelis in theology, Jacobi in philosophy, Herder in history, Winckelman at least in external knowledge of art. He attained the highest eminence in no one of these directions. Still less did he represent the characteristic tendencies and dominant prejudices of contemporary society; every party was afraid of him, and not one would own him. Theologians were terrified by his free-thinking; the Free-thinkers said he had too much theology. That he allowed a free "enthusiasm" to the workings of genius, was an offence to the classical pedants in art; that he showed no mercy to mere groundless admirations and tinted sentiment, made him a severe presence in the eyes of incipient romanticism. A Protestant who could set "tradition" above "Scripture;" a Rationalist, who could vindicate the doctrines of a Trinity and of endless punishment; a German Liberal, who could distrust the "enlightened" court of Frederick the Great, and disdain the one-sided freedom to gibe and disbelieve; a Theist, who believed God immanent and the universe something else than His machine; an Optimist, who questioned neither the reality nor the possible eternity of sin; so curiously crossed, in almost every direction, the lines of current opinion, as to perplex pre-occupied judgments, and appear for the moment a marvel of moral and dialectic paradox. The greatness of Lessing consists rather in this, that he neither led nor followed, but stood alone; with inherent strength to repel from him the false pressures of his time; yet not through the mere negative resistance of good taste, but with the positive and polemic force of distinct conviction. In him two different ages, and many opposite tendencies of thought, seem to us to find their point of equilibrium. He marks the transfer from France to Germany of the intellectual sceptre of Europe. He took something from the naturalism of the English Deists; yet brought nature and miracle to meet in a higher sphere. From the experience-philosophy he derived a taste for the real and concrete; yet pushed forward with strong faith into the ideal and transcendent. He inaugurated the modern methods of biblical criticism; appreciated and named the superstition of "Bibliolatry;" applied to

Revelation the idea of perpetual development; and so dealt with history that it never again can dispense with a philosophy. Impelled by his nature to struggle for neglected elements of truth, he was acutely sensitive to all narrowness and confusion in the prevalent modes of thought; and setting himself to war with their exclusiveness, demanded for the future the needful complement to the wisdom of the past. It is frequently remarked that the characteristics of each generation are produced by reaction from the errors and defects of its predecessor. To Lessing's quick critical feeling the reaction was immediate and required no time: and hence he exhibits in the germ most of the marking features of the next age, and comes into comparison at various points with the leading scholars, philosophers, and theologians of a century beyond his own.

The extraordinary freshness and vigour of Lessing's writings to the present hour are apt to make one forget that he was the contemporary of men whom no one reads except from historical curiosity,—of Reimarus and the Wolfian metaphysicians; of Nicolai and his coterie of literary coxcombs; of Zollikoffer and the rapid latitudinarians in religion. Flung upon a cold and barren era (1729-1781), his youth had no generous spiritual nurture. Kant had not yet written, or Schleiermacher preached, or Niebuhr lectured, or Goethe sung. An arid learning, which toiled among the remains without reproducing the life of antiquity; a formal logic and ontology which divided and subdivided the universe, and labelled it (heart and all) like an anatomical museum; canons of taste extracted by Gallic analysis from Grecian genius; a Christianity afraid of every nobler inspiration, and used as the mask of orthodox intolerance or liberal conceit; these were the influences surrounding the early years of Lessing. In religion, all the nerve of the old Lutheranism was gone. Constructed for aggression on formalism, rather than for resistance to philosophy, it had no sooner ceased to conquer than it began to recede. Even Melancthon, when he had gained breathing time for thought, had been unable to remain faithful to it; and when, for near a century, successive inroads had been made upon it, first by Calixtus and his school, next by the Pietists, and then by the metaphysics of Wolf, its tone became depressed and its adherents few. Even among the parochial clergy, its representatives were probably

in a minority, composed of the least active-minded of their class; and they could not but be conscious that their severe dogmatism had become an unwelcome presence, like a guest that had lingered beyond his time. They raised, therefore, no such voice as had been heard in the days of Calovius and Meissner; but, soured and saddened, bore their testimony with anxious and repulsive rigour. Hope is perhaps a necessary sweetener of human temper; certain it is, that a sect conscious of decline grows snappish and ungenial; its compassionate affection turns to gall, and its piety becomes an indictment against the world. So was it with the Wittenberg orthodoxy about the middle of the last century; and whatever revival it has since had is due rather to the faults and excesses of its rivals than to the discovery of new merits in itself.

Of these rivals the most inimical and most formidable was the thorough-going Deism which had sapped the foundations of the whole system of Western Christianity, as then constructed. The writings of Bolingbroke and Voltaire, of Toland and Collins, had been imported into Germany, and widely diffused by translations, or worse—by effective extracts introducing ineffective replies. The *Acta Eruditorum*, the *History of Religious Parties* by Baumgarten, and Mosheim's account of the *Enemies of the Christian Religion*, scattered the seeds of these opinions first within the enclosures of the Universities, and then in the well-prepared field of city society. The Parisian tone of thought pervaded all the great centres of intellectual activity; affecting to be alone worthy of men of parts and knowledge, and dismissing all else as a low provincialism. The advance had not yet been made into the bold atheism of the later revolutionary period. But the residual Natural Religion recognised after Christianity had been dissipated, was not of an inspiring kind. The conception of the universe, which it worked up into a Theology, was supplied entirely from the physical sciences and the most elementary doctrine of mechanical force; and its God was primarily found, not as a living Spirit, not as an eternal Holy One, but as a prior Causality. Nor did its doctrine of a Future Life pretend to be a moving reality: adorned by the rhetoric of Cicero, and entertained as an hypothesis by Tacitus, the idea was too classical to be discarded; but its tenure was a small balance of metaphysic probability; and its possible dis-

appointment could give the satisfied wise man no serious concern.

Between these extremes, and claiming to have the merits of both with the defects of neither, existed a party of "Rational Christians," who insisted on the concurrence of Reason and Faith, and smoothed away all difficulties on either side. The harmony between the two they unfortunately established, not by any profound appreciation of the great problems of faith, but by ignoring them; not by descending below the contrarieties of "nature" and "grace," but by failing to reach them. They adhered to the Bible, dear to orthodoxy, because it contained little else than the religion professed by Deism. The apparatus of reconciliation consisted accordingly, first of a mild and good-natured philosophy to smile away the awful shades of sin, and "make things pleasant" in this world, and reduce man's moral alienation to natural distance; and next, of an obliging Scriptural criticism that will put the most charitable construction upon everything; that will not hear of a contradiction, but compel discrepancies to shake hands; that makes the easy explain the difficult, whether comprehending it or not; that posts the supernatural in reserve, to be used only in case the natural can hold out no more; that conjures the Devil and his Temptations into the phantasmagoria of a trance, and resolves the exorcism of demons into the cure of fits; that can harmonise John and Matthew, Paul and James; and, should anything still remain which is distasteful to good sense, can explain it as a condescending *accommodation* on the part of Christ and his apostles to the superstitions of their time. The men who took this view produced vapid books on "The principal truths of Religion," and on "The faith of Christians;" or defences of Revelation, like Leland's in our own country, so manifestly weak and twaddling, that if the reader was not sceptical at the beginning he could scarcely fail to be so at the end. These men, Spalding, Nösselt, Jerusalem, were not equal to the scientific emergencies of Christian controversy. Respectable in their personal character and sincere in their convictions, they not unworthily represented Christianity on its practical side; but had no insight into anything beyond the ethical level of religion, no feeling for historical criticism, nor any consistent logic for the proof of a Divine authority. They conceded too much to both the other sides to operate

with effect on either. Their very apologies for Christianity were infected by the philosophy of Deism; while their harmonistic ingenuities assumed the orthodox conception of the Bible. Leaving undisturbed the principle of a documentary revelation, yet accepting the condition that it must comprise only the self-consistent and intelligibly true, they burthened the religion with all the imperfections of its first literature; and after all put nothing into it beyond what is found in any tolerable treatise on Natural Theology. The result was inevitable; that they coerced and modernised the *letter*, stripping it of local colouring and soaking away its historical concreteness; without gaining, after all this sacrifice, anything but completer blindness to its distinctive *spirit*.

It is not wonderful that, under such ecclesiastical conditions, a mind so impatient as Lessing's of either narrow dogmatism or washy compromise, should feel no attraction to the Church and no early interest in theological studies. An almost wilful freedom distinguished him from the first; during his academical career interfering, as his father complained, with any *persistent* direction of his studies; in the succeeding years rendering any restraints of even a lay office irksome to him, and making it difficult to suit him with a profession; and so confirmed into a habit in his maturity, that, when late in life he contracted a marriage, terminated in two years by the death of his wife, his friends,—and Professor Schwartz adopts their judgment,—considered such surrender of his independence an “amiable inconsequence.” At Leipzig University no theological auditorium, not even Gellert's, had any charm for him; and he sent word home that he found himself wanting in every quality, of thought and elocution, that could fit him for the pulpit. Ernesti's lectures on Greek history and Roman archaeology, and Kästner's exercises in disputation, which he attended with great zeal, seem to have enchained him most. Theophrastus, Plautus and Terence were his favourite authors: and dramatic literature and representations were at once his serious study and his chief amusement. This entire devotion to the Belles Lettres and the fine arts continued, with little exception, till his forty-first year, when (in 1770) he exchanged his office of dramaturgist to the Hamburg Theatre (which he had held for three years) for that of librarian at Wolfenbüttel. For a short time, indeed,

while resident at Breslau in the capacity of private secretary, he had occupied himself, ten years before, both with Spinoza's philosophy and with ecclesiastical history, and had projected a treatise on the Christian persecutions and martyrs. But, with this slight interlude, his life had been engaged wholly in æsthetic criticism and production: and he reached the grand period of his polemical activity, a mere accomplished layman, not merely without the special training of a churchman by profession, but unfurnished with the outfit of even the amateur theologian. This fact, so offensive to the "Professorthum" of Germany, it is important to remember, if we are to appreciate either the animus of the controversies which occupied his later years or the merits of the criticism and dialectic which he brought into them.

Meanwhile, through indirect influence on his tastes and judgment, his literary years contributed in no doubtful degree to the colouring of his theological. His dramatic perception, his artistic study of character, his experiments in combining different types of personality, for effects of moral harmony or contrast, could not fail to cultivate his eye for the lights and shadows of humanity, and quicken his discernment of what is weak and partial in any given expression and development of life. The links which concatenate any speculative system of ideas he might or might not have acquired the skill to scrutinize: but let that system take possession of a *person* and use him as its organ, and the dramatist can pronounce upon it in this living form: he instantly feels the want of proportion, is affected painfully or ludicrously by the twist, and can tell where and why it is that the balance fails. If he have also the faculty of embracing and analysing a logical as well as an individualised whole, he can work his way up from the defects of the personal incarnation to the flaw or omission in the speculative construction. A blemish in the representative character will serve as index to a weakness in the theory. It is to this mode of judgment that Lessing's polemical writings largely owe their vivacity, their severity, their truth. He had studied the *men* in whom the several tendencies of his time were realised. He well knew how the oil of sanctity and the gall of bitterness mingled in the composition of the old Lutheran clergyman. He had estimated the *persiflage* and "Lucianism" of the French sceptic, and thought it but

an egotistic love of truth that could retire upon so easy a victory and care for nothing more. He had amused himself with the insipid incapacity of the "new-fashioned theologians" of the liberal school; he saw how helplessly they were tossed on the troubled sea of opinion, with neither any helm of guiding philosophy, nor any breeze of impelling faith: and refused to heed them till they could either speculate or prophesy. When his mind was directed on questions of belief, these personal appreciations were transmuted into doctrinal estimates: but in their abstract form the traces of their living origin remained: and notwithstanding the scholastic guise of the theologic critic, the play of the features betrays the satirist, and the garb of serious drama appears beneath.

Moreover, the personal relations into which his literary career introduced him, had an important influence on his sympathies and opinions. In particular, a visit to Berlin immediately after his University course,—a visit prolonged into a stay of five or six years,—determined both the work and the society of the next period, and constituted the most intimate friendship of his life. Nicolai, the Berlin publisher and author, ambitious of being the Mæcenas of Germany, used to gather around him a society both of young aspirants and men of established repute in the world of letters. His house, his company, his opinions, were copies from the *salons* of Paris; and became a sort of propagandist institution for free-thinking ideas, and a court of universal critical inquisition. To the student fresh from College, and fermenting with unsettled admirations and eager hopes, the friendly reception, the literary stir, the copiousness of new books, the circulation of intellectual gossip, the encounter with reputed arbiters of taste, at the bibliopolist's house, could not fail to be highly attractive: and here it was that Lessing formed the first projects that engaged his genius. In conjunction with Nicolai and others, he commenced, in 1757, the "*Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften*," and he wrote a considerable proportion of the celebrated "*Letters on Literature*," which commenced their series two years later. If his participation in these enterprises gradually became less zealous and productive, it was because nearer acquaintance did not strengthen his sympathy with the Berlin circle. Though he continued to correspond with Ni-

colai on æsthetic matters, and to be welcome at his house, he soon found that he must expect there no interest in any deep or earnest conviction, no tolerance even of anything that could not be measured by the rod and chain of a few self-appointed world-surveyors. The bookseller and his associates contracted more and more the habits and susceptibilities of a clique, committed to rigid little formulas of admiration, jealous of younger and more various life, and, in the name of freedom, exercising a monstrous intellectual tyranny. Throwing up their entrenched camp of liberalism on the sands of Berlin, and thinking it the very navel of the world, they defied all enemies, refused all alliance, and shot every wanderer beyond the lines. Every new phenomenon that appeared in their neighbourhood and avoided their enclosure, was pronounced insignificant, and visited with their contempt; Goethe's early poetry, the philosophies of Kant and Fichte, the historical conceptions of Herder. A position at once so offensive and so isolated naturally tempted revenge: and as the affluence of time produced school after school of fresh thought and feeling, each in turn had its fling at the "Nicolaites;" whom, accordingly, the protests of Jacobi and Lavater, the wit of Goethe and Schiller, the satiric painting of the Schlegels and Novalis, have set on an unenviable eminence as the stock-figures representing empty-headed arrogance and intolerant conceit. To no one could this spirit be more uncongenial than to Lessing; whose open-mindedness, whose delight in watching the ever-moving waters of thought, were of the most genuine kind; and in whom the constant outlook for *more* truth and prophetic faith that it would come, reach an almost pathetic depth. He therefore not only withheld from this coterie the workings of his mind on religion and philosophy, but made public disclaimer of all participation in the "Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek," the organ of their critical tribunal. The Review survived the discredit of this repudiation: but it fell more and more into garrulity and literary hack-work, and had ceased to act on human affairs some time before it ceased to exist.

There was one life-long friendship, however, as we have said, formed at the house of Nicolai. It was there that, in 1754, when both were at the age of twenty-five, Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn first met, and discovered how much there

was in each which the other needed, trusted, and loved. Lessing's stronger, clearer nature, necessarily determined the relation to be one of intellectual dependence and trust on the part of his gentle and reverential friend. Until they met, no one seems to have discovered Mendelsohn's depth of sentiment and gifts of graceful thought. It was Lessing, whose appreciation and hopeful prophecies first awakened in him sufficient self-reliance to yield to his inspirations, and try what response there might be for him in the hearts of men. Hence the tone of noble gratitude that mingled with his affection for Lessing; and the jealous—even too susceptible—tenderness with which, as survivor, he guarded the reputation of his friend. Few would have predicted so close an amity between such contrasted men. Mendelsohn, imbued with an Oriental veneration, a meditative glow, a moral wisdom intent on ameliorating life, a peaceful spirit shrinking from the jar of words: Lessing, quickened with Western inquisitiveness, sanguine of intellectual enterprise, admitting neither love nor good till he sees that its root is in the *true*; inspirited by debate and doubtful else of the triumph of the right:—showed by their mutual affection, how much deeper is the unity of the human heart than the contrarieties of temperament and culture. As if tintured still with the influence of a warmer land, Mendelsohn's mind seemed wrapped in a Southern evening's summer haze, and musing till the stars came out and the sounds of day were gone. Lessing, true son of Northern latitudes, was rather the restless sea-king, despising the sluggish fields when he could ride upon the seething deep, ever ready to breathe the Arctic winds, to struggle with the defiance of nature, and be proud of a region in which lassitude would die. But the same heaven embraces every zone; and one sacred sense of light and love overarched and united these two men. How deeply the firmer nature was touched by the gentler is testified by Lessing's last piece; for Mendelsohn is the prototype of Nathan the Wise.

With the removal to Wolfenbüttel, in 1770, commenced the closing and only theological stage of Lessing's life. Scarcely had he settled there before he discovered in the library an unknown treatise on the Eucharist, composed in the 11th century, in which a doctrine of the real presence, essentially the same as Luther's, was defended as the true

teaching of the Church. The treatise, being by no less a person than Berengar, of Tours, and in refutation of the great Anselm of Canterbury, was a real ecclesiastical treasure, and was naturally acceptable to the German clergy, as an important addition to their *Vindiciæ Lutherianæ*. The publication of it by Lessing brought him a degree of orthodox favour which amused without deceiving him.

A further discovery was at hand, which was destined to reverse his ecclesiastical repute. This same year, he was shown, in the family of Reimarus, at Hamburg, an anonymous manuscript, containing portions of a deistical treatise on the chief points of Christian evidences. He took a copy of the manuscript, and sent it confidentially to Mendelsohn. From the first he was desirous of publishing it, not that it expressed his own views, but because it would excite a discussion which could not fail to be salutary, and leave something clearer than before. But it was not till 1774 that he brought out the first portion, on the "Toleration of Deists." It fell quite flat, however, and the stir which the editor anticipated did not arise till, in 1777, he published the five next fragments on "The clerical outcry against Reason;" "The impossibility of a Revelation, in which all men can have well-grounded faith;" "The passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea;" "The Old Testament books not written to reveal a religion;" and "The accounts of the Resurrection." The storm excited by the appearance of these was raised to the highest pitch by the issue, next year, of the concluding piece, on "The objects of Jesus and the disciples." Thus was completed the celebrated series of "Wolfenbüttel Fragments," so called from the library in which the manuscript was said to have been found. They were accompanied by introductions and comments from Lessing, sometimes corrective, sometimes apologetic, whence chiefly must be gathered any judgment respecting his own theological sentiments. He was plunged, by his editorial relation to the Fragmentist, into a boundless turmoil of controversy. Old Semler, scared into reaction by the effects of his own critical liberalism, attacked the fragments with more vehemence than dignity, and ridiculed the ground on which the editor vindicated their publication, viz., a zeal for Christianity and desire to call into the field some champion equal to the exigencies of this new challenge. This

plea was especially satirised in an appendix contributed, as Semler affirmed, by an eminent statesman, in which is described the trial before the "Lord Mayor" of an incendiary for setting somebody's house on fire. The defendant acknowledges the act, but submits that he thought the house was fire-proof, and had only meant to test the tenant's presence of mind, and give the Insurance Companies an opportunity of displaying their efficiency. The Lord Mayor orders the man off to Bedlam. "And everybody knows"—so ends the parable—"that there he remains to this day." The bitterness of Semler, his arrogance and pedantry, were not rendered more tolerable by any real mastery of the argument. He set aside all difficulties in the evangelical history by drawing a distinction, which he left quite undefined, between a local and accidental Christianity, and the universal and essential, and referring all blemishes and errors of the gospels to the former; and avoided compromising the full inspiration of the Christian founders, by the unworthy subterfuge of his "accommodation doctrine." In the desire to wipe off first his account with opponents of inferior name,—Walch, Schumann, Göze,—Lessing missed his opportunity of reply to Semler; against whose treatise he projected an elaborate work,—the advance, as he said, no longer of skirmishing light troops, but of his main army; and was cut off by death ere it could be achieved.

Whence now, and what, were these renowned "Fragments?" Notwithstanding the mystery in which their origin was long enveloped, and the doubts recently revived by Illgen (in his *Zeitschrift für historische Theologie*, 1839), a combination of evidence which seems superfluously strong, fixes the authorship on Hermann Samuel Reimar, Professor of oriental languages in Hamburg, and son-in-law to the distinguished Johann Albert Fabricius.* He died in the spring of 1768; and it was at the house of his son that, in 1770, Lessing first saw the manuscript, probably through the instrumentality of his daughter, Elise Reimar. This manuscript, which an internal date refers to the year 1744, was only a fragment from the first draft of a treatise, repeatedly rewritten and enlarged in subsequent years, and

* The general concurrence on this literary question renders it needless to weave together for our readers the various threads of proof. How curious and firm a tissue they make may be seen in Prof. Schwarz's note to p. 99.

not completed before the year 1767. Of the entire treatise, in two considerable volumes, entitled "Apology for the rational worshippers of God," one manuscript copy exists in the Hamburg City-library; and another in the Göttingen University-library; both having been presented by Reimarus the son just before his death in 1814. They contain, word for word, the fragments published by Lessing. The work professes to have been written, not for the world, but simply with a view to settle and clear the author's own convictions: and it bears the unmistakable impress of serious and conscientious inquiry. Reimarus, as Prof. Schwarz remarks, was essentially the Strauss of his day;—that is, as Strauss resolved Christianity into Hegelianism, so did Reimarus resolve it into the Wolfian philosophy; the historical element being dissipated, in the recent case, in the interests of Pantheism; in the elder one, in the interests of Deism. The critical methods employed for explaining the history away are different in the two cases. Both indeed begin with the same negative process; alleging discrepancies and incoherences which prove the narrative untrustworthy; but in accounting for the recital as it stands, the two critics have recourse to different types of hypothesis: Reimarus dealing with the record as *false* history; Strauss as no history at all: the one leaving its date and authorship little disturbed, and ascribing what he deems untrue in it to error and unvaracity in the writers; the other, permitting to the materials so long a time ere they were committed to writing, that the personality of Jesus had been transformed in the interval into an ideal of the Messiah. These constructive hypotheses, in which probabilities are quite overworked, constitute the weakness of both writers; as indeed of every attempt to fill the void which a destructive criticism creates: and it is far easier for an opponent to batter down the conjectural history which they erect, than to repair the breaches in the real one which they assail. Thus nothing can be more arbitrary than the assumption of the fragment on the Resurrection, that the story put by the Pharisees into the mouth of the Roman guard, about the disciples' theft of their Master's body,—hit the precise truth of the matter; and refutations addressing themselves to this point gain a cheap success: but the variations in the different narratives remain as unrelieved as when exhibited by Reimarus: the

ingenuities of reconciling interpreters tending only to bring criticism into contempt, resulting as they do in what Lessing called "the harmony of wax-noses," which may be squeezed into any shape. And again, when Reimarus, in the last fragment, maintains that, after the death of Christ, his disciples set about the construction of quite a new doctrine respecting his person, and were driven by necessity to make up the theory of a suffering and glorified Messiah, coming again to judge the world, and that, having struck out this idea, they devised a history to suit it; it is easy to show, how little way such an hypothesis will go, in explaining the difference between the conceptions of Matthew and the system of Paul: but the alleged *fact* of the co-presence in the New Testament of *two Christianities*, and the evidence that, by *some* means, one of these did develope itself into the other, are surely placed beyond the reach of doubt. This distinction, between the critical facts of discrepancy, and the inference drawn from it by the Fragmentist, Lessing himself marked from the first. The variations in the accounts of the same transactions, as reported in different gospels, prove, he says, no fraudulent misrepresentation by eye-witnesses, but only that we are not really in presence of the eye-witnesses, and suffer from the inevitable imperfections of later historical sources. And this thought, working upon the phenomena of agreement and difference in the first three gospels, led him to maintain the very doctrine, which Eichhorn's elaboration afterwards rendered celebrated, of a prior or original gospel,—also identified by him with the gospel according to the Hebrews,—whose contents furnished the common base of our canonical synoptics. In like manner, the traces in Scripture of two different Christianities, a Judaic and a human, he freed from the suspicion of artifice and sudden accommodation to necessity; and treated as the natural expansion, distributed over a generation or a century, of a faith at first compressed and narrowed by historical conditions, and reaching its plenitude only as the season of its experience advanced. And not in reference to these points alone, but generally, Lessing refused to surrender Christianity, on proof of error in its first teachers, uncertainty in its reported miracles, contradictions in its early literature, misapplication of Messianic prophecies. All these he regards as but the external accidents, the transitory

media, of the religion, constituting, it may be, its support in one age and its weakness in another: they do not belong to its inner essence in which alone the real evidence of spiritual truth is found: and he who detects anything amiss with them may even render a service by driving men from sham-proofs, that really persuade no one, to true ones that lie at the heart of things. Religious doctrine cannot be deduced from mere historical facts without a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος* vitiating the whole process. *Facts* indeed *may* become the proper ground of moral and spiritual faith: but then they must be facts which come over again and again, and betray an element that is permanent and eternal; which form part of the experience and consciousness of humanity; and ally themselves with the Divine by not losing their *presence* in the world. But *unrepeated facts*, which limit themselves to a moment, which are the incidents of a single personality, and are left behind quite insulated in the past, show,—were it only by your not expecting them again,—that they are detached from the persistent and essential life of the universe and humanity. They are but once and away; and least of all therefore can testify of the untransitory and ever-living. The real can teach us only so far as it has an ideal kernel, redeeming it from the character of a solitary phenomenon. Among the various expositions and applications of this favourite theme of Lessing's, we select the following sentences from his *Axiomata*.*

1. "The Bible evidently contains more than belongs to Religion.

2. That in this "*more*" the Bible is still infallible, is mere hypothesis.

3. The letter is not the spirit, and the Bible is not the Religion.

4. The objections therefore against the letter and against the Bible, are not on that account objections against the spirit and against the Religion.

5. Moreover there was a religion ere there was a Bible.

6. Christianity was in being before Evangelists and Apostles had written. Some time elapsed before the first of them wrote, and a very considerable time before the whole canon was constituted.

* See his collected works, vol. x. p. 10: or Schwarz, p. 147.

7. However much therefore may depend on these writings, it is impossible that the whole truth of the Christian religion can rest upon them.

8. If there was a period during which, diffused as the Christian religion already was, and many as were the souls filled already with its power, still not a letter had yet been written of the records which have come down to us, then it must be also possible for all the writings of Evangelists and Apostles to perish, yet the religion taught by them still to subsist.

9. The religion is not true, because Evangelists and Apostles taught it; but they taught it, because it is true.

10. Its interior truth must furnish the interpretation of the writings it has handed down; and no writings handed down can give it interior truth, if it has none."

In his controversy with Göze, he illustrates this distinction between the essence and the historical form of Christianity, by a parable to the following effect. A wise king of a great realm, built a palace of immense size and very peculiar architecture. About this structure, there came from the very first a foolish strife to be carried on, especially among reputed connoisseurs, people, that is, who had least looked into the interior. This strife was not about the palace itself, but about various old ground-plans of it, and drawings of the same very difficult to make out. Once, when the watchmen cried out "Fire," these connoisseurs, instead of running to help, snatched up their plans, and instead of putting out the fire on the spot, kept standing with their plans in hand, making a hubbub all the while, and squabbling about whether this was the spot on fire, and that the place to put it out. Happily, the safety of the palace did not depend on these busy wranglers, for it was not on fire at all; the watchmen had been frightened by the Northern lights, and mistaken them for fire (p. 157). It is impossible to convey by a clearer image Lessing's feeling that a Christianity once incorporated in the very substance of history and civilization, seated deep in human sentiment and thought, and developed into literature, law, and life, subsists independently of critical questions, and is with us, not as the contingent vapour that a wind may rise to blow away, but as the cloud that has dropped its rain and mingled with the roots of things.

It will have been observed how near, in his denial of a

regulative function to the Bible, Lessing approached to the Catholic position, that it is the Church that authenticates the Scripture, not Scripture the Church. Nor did he rest with a mere negative verdict on this point, as against the Protestant misuse of Scripture. When pressed to say where then the doctrinal appeal in last resort was to be found, he at once replied, The oldest tradition,—the *regula fidei* of the first four centuries,—is the “Rock on which the Church was built.” Nothing however could be further from his thought, than to constitute the creed of any period a rule absolute for the present and all time. His thesis is to be understood partly as *historical*, declaring that, in point of fact, it was customary with the Fathers to settle dogmatic questions by appeal to apostolic Tradition; and partly as simply *preferential*, to the effect that, if we would grasp the essence of Christian faith, tradition is a better aid than Scripture;—the condensed formula, in which the predominant feeling of the Church at a particular time has expressed itself, than a miscellaneous collection of writings, various, occasional, individual, venerable as a literature, but inapplicable as norm and definition. A short portion of the Christian’s collective *worship*—a prayer, a hymn, a rite, especially a concentrated Confession of Faith into which the devout consciousness of thousands has converged,—will, at all events, be an expression of *religion*, not of *history*; and you are less likely to miss there the kernel of the faith than in a search for it through the diffuse and complex and often accidental memorials that make up the New Testament collection. In vindicating the principle of “tradition,” Lessing meant to assert the rights of the current consciousness of a living Church against the fixed letter of ever so sacred an antiquity: and if he proved his case by reference to the selected instance of the first centuries, it was only because *there* the competing rules could be brought into directest comparison, and at the very time when Scripture contained least that was out of date, it had still been subordinated to the other *κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας*. And by narrowing the ground of his argument to that period, he could free the discussion from the needless intrusion of dogmatic alarms; since, for the security of an orthodox creed, the *regula fidei* is at least not *less* eligible than the Scriptures. Doubtless there is something of dialectic management in his treatment of this subject; and

propositions occur which we must regard as laid down *γυμναστικῶς*, rather than *δογματικῶς*. He carried further than we can quite approve the habit of strictly choosing his own polemic ground, and so limiting himself to it as to establish one thing only at a time, without heeding any collateral misunderstandings which the process might create or leave. His *first* positions are thus sometimes only relatively sound, as against his opponents: and when he has excluded the utterly false, he can advance, by another passage of comparative logic, to something truer than his own previous truth. To those who compare his defence of the early creeds as a *regula fidei* with other traces of his theology, this play with his exuberant strength,—which postpones the best till he has secured the better,—will be evident enough. To suppose that he really meant to bind all ages by the rule of one, or to check indefinite living development by making an oracle of the past, is to ascribe a Papist absolutism to the most Protestant of Protestants.

The Protestant use of Scripture as an authoritative oracle implies the notion that the first age was the exclusive seat of revealing inspiration; that with it the Divineness passed away, and the world became again "common or unclean." To remove the Scriptures from such regulative use is to call this notion in question, and implies a different conception of Revelation, and of the relation between the Divine and the Human Spirit. Accordingly, we find Lessing expounding a theory of God's dealings with the world, which, while it destroys the exceptional and final character of the biblical dispensations, leaves to them their sacred place and function, as the media of approach between God and man. He conceives of Revelation, not as a thing flung down upon history once for all and all at once and left there,—not as ready-made and finished truth, valid equally for all the universe; but as an incessant *process*, running through the whole existence of mankind. By the happiest of analogical definitions, he calls it the *Divine Education of the human race*. It is a training-school, whose work is ever going on, with elementary books, from the mere alphabet of thought to the approaches of highest wisdom. All culture is in its very nature *progressive*: its *outward* apparatus and means rising *per saltum* through successive steps that may be numbered,—book after book, class after class; its *inner* growth, among the faculties them-

selves, being on the other hand continuous and unmarked from hour to hour. In the great school of human kind, three separate stages, each with appropriate furniture of instruction, are needful to complete the outward work; with which the inner development, ever flowing and with different course in different souls, can only roughly correspond. The Hebrew dispensation represents the first stage, and the Old Testament is its class-book. In what now does the excellence of such a book consist? Not surely in its exhausting the subject of which it treats;—not in its anticipating on its first page the teachings of its last;—not in its dictating all that is to be learned, and furnishing no problems, no exercises of discipline, on which the scholar's mind may work: but in adaptation to the incipient stage of culture; in gradual advance, as the pupil becomes ready for more; in leaving deducibles that may independently won; and in not closing the way towards the step beyond. It is therefore a vain objection of the Fragmentist (in his fourth piece, entitled "The Old Testament books not written to reveal a religion"), that the Hebrew Scriptures are silent on the doctrine of a future life: in the infancy of mankind, the idea of eternity is beyond their grasp, and the moral law must declare itself in more immediate sanctions. It is vain again to complain that so impure a Monotheism is found in the older writings. Truth given is never possessed like truth achieved; and when the simply patriarchal and national Jehovah had been sublimed from the merely greatest to the absolutely Only God, the hard-earned discovery was infinitely more precious than any dictated dogma. Even the apparent interruption of the course of training by the Babylonish exile and its suspension of the national life, was but a wholesome change of discipline. By intercourse with a foreign people of larger culture, the Hebrews apprehended the idea of immortality at last, and then found to their joy that their own books were not without hints and surmises of it which they had never seen before. They returned better than they went. Soon the point was reached when they began to extract *more* from their text-book than it would fairly yield,—sure sign that it had done its work and that their mind was ready for an advance. Then was inaugurated the *second* stage, and Christianity took up the *boyhood* of the race, and put the New Testament into their hand as the succeeding manual.

No other book has so exercised and improved the human mind; and if of these benefits it has been a necessary condition, that men have taken it for their all-in-all of knowledge, this is only what must always be thought at the time of whatever system of instruction spreads to the mind's horizon. The one grand advance made by this Divine handbook, is in its positive and practical disclosure of the immortality of the soul: but the less ennobling doctrines of the Trinity, Original Sin, and Atonement, still come so near to the essence of important truths, that he who thinks himself above them must beware lest, in his conceit, he lose in himself or snatch from his weaker brother conceptions of real moment and not easy to invest with other forms. "Ah! scholar of more forward capacity, you that, having reached the last leaf of your class-book, burn and stamp with joy, take heed how you let your weaker fellow-scholar observe what you divine or begin already to discern." Still, the lagging pupil will in the end follow the more advanced; will see light in front, and will have made his own, by process of living thought, the truths which at first he had learned by rote. *For, the transformation of revealed truths into truths of reason is the very aim and crowning success of the whole scheme of Divine discipline.* As the master goes before his pupils in their reckonings, and tells them the answer which their computation ought to bring; so the great Educator of humanity does but fore-announce the results which the combinations of thought will ultimately evolve.

Education however, whether of infancy or boyhood, is still but a means to an ulterior end; and it were a distrust of God to doubt that the ripe manhood of humanity will yet be reached. As His law was first apprehended by its immediate retributions, and next became solemn with eternal sanctions, so does there yet remain a third stage, in which it will be deemed holy on its own account, and the good will be served simply because of its goodness. The time must come of a new and eternal gospel, when the class-books of an earlier period will be left behind. Is this hurtful to the dignity of the New Testament? Does not, on the contrary, the Testament itself give promise of such a kingdom of heaven? Have not all enthusiastic sects proclaimed it? Their error was not in the promise, but in the *date*. They went too fast, and wanted the world's maturity ere its child-

hood was half gone. And this is ever the character of fanaticism: it cannot wait for the future, but would urge the step of God's Providence to its own hot haste. The Divine wisdom moves by a serener but a surer law, and knows that in a moral sphere the straightest line is not always the shortest. Ere all is ripe, each individual must have passed through the course, whereby the race has attained to its maturity; and, as for this end a single life so often does not suffice, what forbids his return again and again to this world, to achieve fresh steps on his spiritual way?

In this theory, as in his vindication of tradition, Lessing makes, at one point, a curious approach to the Catholic doctrine. Revelation, as a Divine economy, is not a sacred *literature*, but a living *institution*. Only, his object in thus changing the Protestant representation, is to set in action a principle subversive alike of Catholic fixity and Lutheran orthodoxy,—the principle of a *progressive* revelation, each part of which is to be successively outstripped, and which gains its end by superseding itself, and handing over its truths to the custody and operation of Reason. The supernatural is not called in question by Lessing: but it is reduced to a subordinate position, and made the mere occasion of a natural development, which it is permitted somewhat to accelerate. Even this it does not always accomplish: for the Hebrews after all were anticipated by the Chaldæans in the knowledge of a future life, and were taught the highest truth they ever reached by exile among Pagans! Lessing not improbably introduced this very instance to intimate how little stress he would lay on any specialty claimed for the Jewish people; to raise other positive religions of the world into a position comparable with that of the Scripture dispensation; and to leave the way open for applying to them the same principles which he had carried through the selected cases of the Hebrew and the Christian faiths. At least, we think, with Professor Schwarz, that in substituting the idea of *Perfectibility* for that of *Perfection*, as an attribute of Revelation, in *starving out* particular and exclusive inspiration by giving it little or nothing to do, and in making everything culminate in natural evolution of faculty, Lessing would fain supersede all exceptional supernaturalism, draw the whole

world into the circle of Divine discipline, and merge into one conception the antithesis of "grace" and "nature."

On Lessing's views of *Historical* religion some further light might perhaps be thrown, did our limits permit us to investigate the question as to the precise form of his *Natural Theology*. It is well known that on this matter there arose, after his death, a controversy which to this hour has been brought to no determinate result. It involves in its web so many delicate and complicated threads of metaphysical and personal criticism, that we can only refer to the external facts, and state what appears the most reasonable verdict upon them. During his life-time, Lessing had passed for a disciple, in the main, of the Leibnitzian philosophy. In 1770 he had been led to the study of Leibnitz by Dutens' collected edition of his works; and from that time, he not only invariably spoke of the great Hanoverian with admiration, but vindicated from the charge of insincere accommodation his conservatism on the doctrine of eternal punishments, and betrayed the influence of the Monadology and Theodicée in many parts of his own scheme of thought;—in his idea of Creation, of endless development of individual self-determining beings, of the pre-existence and transmigration of souls. He had also entered into the Leibnitzian polemic against the Arians and Socinians, and formed to himself a Trinity on principles closely resembling those of Locke's opponent. His mind was too spontaneously active to allow indeed of anything like a sequacious discipleship; and the metaphysical impulse was too little decided in him to produce any organised expression of his philosophical creed. But his friend Mendelsohn, who concerned himself much with speculative systems, never doubted that he was a Theist, an Individualist, and an Optimist of the same complexion with Leibnitz. It was therefore not without surprise that, after his death, his friends heard on first-hand authority, of a conversation held shortly before, in which he had avowed himself a follower of Spinoza! The reporter was no other than Jacobi,—the philosopher of Faith,—who had visited him in Wolfenbüttel, and conversed with him at length on the 6th and 7th July, 1780. What passed between them is reported at length; and among other expressions of Lessing's are such as these; that "if he were to call himself after any master, he knew no other than Spinoza whom he could

name;" that the ordinary Theists were "not entitled to treat Spinoza like a dead dog;" that Jacobi had better make friends with Spinoza, for, "depend upon it, his was the only philosophy." The account of this interview aggrieved the affectionate Mendelsohn; who could not bear that any one should even seem to know a thought of Lessing's unconfessed to him; and who regarded the ascription to him of Spinozistic tendencies as an imputation on his religious character. So agitated indeed was the too-sensitive friend, that the preparation of his appeal "To Lessing's friends" shattered him to death. The zeal, thus fatal to himself, was unhappily not less over-wrought for the interests of truth, and the service of his friend. It led him to call in question the fidelity of Jacobi's report, and to deal with the whole affair as an unworthy calumny. Not only however *may* the conversation very well have taken place; but, to say nothing of the witness's unimpeachable veracity, it is in the highest degree characteristic of the interlocutors; and contrasts the Platonic enthusiasm of Jacobi with the Aristotelian precision of Lessing in a way that fancy could not imitate. The conversation then being genuine, what did Lessing mean? Prof. Schwarz thinks that he was amusing himself with Jacobi, and "trotting him out;" and that in what he said he followed the clue of a satiric pleasure in touching the sensitive chords of a mind with "one idea," and listening to the rich music which they made. To some extent it may be so; but we find in Lessing too real an earnestness, an intellect too intently strung, to ascribe so much to a mere relaxed and diplomatic play of thought. We should rather seek an explanation in his characteristic propensity to struggle, as we have said, for neglected elements of truth; a propensity which would lead him, neither from temper nor from art, but from the instinct of intellectual justice, to balance Jacobi's judgment of Spinozism by a recognition of its rights. This is the more conceivable, when we remember the peculiarity of Jacobi's point of view. He contended that every profound and consecutive thinker, who once took the metaphysic clue in hand must reach Spinozism, which was the only self-consistent philosophy. At the same time he maintained that Spinozism was Atheism: and concluding from these two positions that there was no way to Theism through speculative thought, he substituted, as ground of

Religion, the direct intuition of Faith for the mediating processes of philosophy. Nothing could be more alien to the genius of Lessing than a principle like this. His unresting, scrutinising mind, ever pushing to the light and sure that it could be reached, had no relish for *first* truths; and, while ever using them, would not like to be reminded of so unpleasant a necessity. Tell him that, in seeking to interpret the universe, he had no choice, but between a blind leap of Faith and the subtle tracks of open vision that wind through every height and depth, and he will take the latter, though with peril of losing himself in infinite wanderings. This, we suspect, is the true key to his conversation with Jacobi. Allowing for this source of deflexion, on that occasion, from his usual line of thought, and judging by the broad evidence of his whole theologic writings, we find in few of his philosophic countrymen such faint traces of sympathy with Spinoza: and, draw where we will the distinction between Pantheism and Theism, Lessing will be found a genuine Theist, with no firmer belief than in a self-conscious, living, willing, and understanding God; whose existence is distinct from the universe, pervading but transcending it, and whose determining agency does not exclude the play of free-will individual beings.

That in this notice we have said so little of Prof. Schwarz's book, is due to its merits and not to its insignificance. Its success is so complete in awakening an interest in its hero, that the reader or the reviewer is carried away to its subject, and forgets itself. We must not however conclude without bearing witness, that the volume is not only thorough in the treatment of its materials, and admirable in their distribution; but vigorous and acute in its criticisms, fresh in style and manner, and the evident product of a genuine knowledge of the times. It leads us to expect with eagerness the larger history of which it is the announced forerunner.

ART. VI.—NOTICES OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

The Divine Drama of History and Civilisation. By the Rev. James Smith, M.A., London. Chapman & Hall, 1854.

MR. SMITH is at some pains to prove that history cannot be read aright unless it be read dramatically. The rationale of the drama, even as he gives it, however, coincides with his view of universal history only in this—that the number of its acts (five), and the mode of development of its *story* is conceived to be the same. For it is curious that the only *real* actor in this Divine Drama is represented as being the Deity Himself—the so-called actors being only more or less adequate and full recipients of the life of God. True, Mr. Smith admits two *modes* of Divine communication, one from without—in which the Deity appears in his own person, and speaks to man as if he were an entirely distinct being (as in the Jewish and Mahometan Revelation)—the other, in which the Deity acts through human organs and faculties, not by formally addressing them, but by occupying them and urging them into activity, revealing Himself *in* man, rather than *to* man (as, partly, in the Christian Revelation, —and more entirely in the Providence of Art and Science,—a department in which all that is divine comes necessarily through this secondary human growth). But though the modes are different, the Actor, in Mr. Smith's view, is one and the same. The whole of History is either the soliloquy of Providence, or if a colloquy at all—only that kind of colloquy which the mind can hold with itself,—the unmanifested Deity conversing with those more or less partial manifestations of Himself in which he has reproduced in detail and specialty some portion of His spiritual attributes. There is in this rationale of history but one real agent admitted—Divine Providence—though we may identify the name more closely with the originating Spirit, than with the totality of created forms through which it works. All human beings are imperfect organs of that one agent,—taken together and as a total, containing a true image;—in

their separation and dispersion one necessarily erroneous or imperfect—but only *imperfect*, not even capable of absolute evil, not even capable of running counter to the purposes of the Deity who dwells in them. Hence the spirit of Mr. Smith's book, though it attempts to give the different attitudes, developments, gradations, of the Divine thought, is essentially undramatic. It is the self-evolution of one mind, taking up different postures, attaining a fuller and fuller expression in human things; but there is no variety of agency, no collision of wills. It is a philosophy of History in the sense of the German Schellingites or Hegelians,—the progressive unfolding of the elementary Thought of the universe into human affairs.

Drama involves real persons, different wills, a collision of agencies,—free movement and moral responsibility; half the interest of drama depends less on the divine destiny overhanging all, than on the human freedom when it comes to a meeting of many ways, and feels that it can *choose* between them. Of course this limited moral freedom is less visible and less considerable in history than in biography, but it does exist there also. Who can say, for example, that the interest of Athenian history does not mainly depend on the feeling that about the age of Pericles there were probably two careers really open to that brilliant nation, one of them demanding partial justice to their allies, and internal self-government, but yet not then morally above their capabilities? that it might have been otherwise with them, *might* have been better, if they had fully used their gifts? But this is not an admitted possibility with Mr. Smith; the development of History is but the divine tide-wave of Providence, Providence moving over the national life, or within it, or both; but all of it Providence. "If History were written with a perfect pen," he says, "we should always be pleased with what has occurred. It is our partiality that regrets, and our ignorance that condemns." Speaking of the action and reaction of one-sided political systems producing their opposites, he says, "there is nothing eternal except rotation and Him who guides it." All evil is but "graduated good," he maintains, "graduated divinity." Disease is but the indication of incompleteness, a token that the type is exhausted and in decay. No distinction is drawn or conceived between moral or personal evil, and the mere natural or apparent evil of decay. All is

spoken of as on the same level—whether the idolatry of ignorance or of moral and voluntary corruption. “The laws of God and Nature are perfect, and idolatry, when it is ripe, will come down like a plum ;” a very good doctrine for moral defect, a very false one for moral evil. Not only according to Mr. Smith is God’s commission a pledge of success, but all success is *pro tanto* a pledge of God’s having issued His commission. This he is constantly reiterating. All success is not only permitted but commissioned by God.

The plan of Mr. Smith’s work is as follows :—Deity first manifested Himself to the Jews as a personal Being distinct from His creatures, constraining the consciousness of man by His authority, *imposing* Truth and Law upon them ; this is the primary attitude of God to man—in which God is seen as absolute Unity, as the Rock of Ages, the Lawgiver, the Compeller, the Irresistible Force of the Universe. This is what Mr. Smith calls the *masculine* side of the Divine thought, because it rules over us, not in us. The Jewish mission was masculine and Oriental—to reveal Jehovah. Contemporaneously, however, the Greek mission was revealing God in multiplicity and infinite detail of forms through creation, through the beauty of nature, the reason, the taste, the skill, the various faculties of man. This is the Occidental or Feminine mission—feminine because the Divine thought is transmitted by Reproduction, by giving birth to an infinite offspring, of particular and finite forms of existence, because it does not dictate to man from outside, but transmits its influence through the law of generation. The force and unbroken unity of God is given in Judaism ;—the variety of human intellect which is the human offspring of that sublime majesty—reveals the Divine to Greece. But each form of Revelation, the disembodied Deity of the Jew, and the Divine in Nature of Greece—is onesided and false, if taken alone, and tends to produce its opposite. Consequently the absolute Deity of the Mosaic law is succeeded first by the Human Reason or human principle of interpretation comprehended in the Rabbinical schools, and then by the full assertion of God incarnate—the divine flowing through man—which was the essence of Christianity. The idea of the one Jehovah above man is grand, but unfertile of human improvement, and needs the supplemental revelation of God *through* man, which it received in Christ. On the other

hand, Greek Naturalism had worked itself out into utter polytheism, and needed again the cohesion of an absolute principle of unity. This succeeded in the Roman mission, where political law and political force is the dictating, subduing, and uniting power—more human and less narrow than Judaism; and therefore capable of binding together not merely one nation, but many nations in a single empire.

With this Roman act in the world's history, the act of political unity, Mr. Smith shows us that the second act of Judaism, in its relaxed or humanised form of Christianity, was woven together (the culture of Greece having been previously absorbed into it) so that Roman Christianity is a first effort at union between the absolutely Divine and the purely human. And when this union is effected, antiquity, as antiquity, disappears, not only by moral decay, but is swept from the earth to a great extent by the series of earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and providential calamities which mark the era of Justinian's reign. Here begins a new period, mediævalism, in which man is prepared, by a new moral childhood, for modern maturity. The Pope is the bridge-maker (Pontifex) by which the human race pass over from the maturity of the classical to the maturity of the modern age. Pagan art and science have died out; only the moral power of Christianity survives; but that is fertile, and gives birth to monasticism, commerce, feudalism, monarchy—the "four constructors of Western Society." Monasticism in its social activity gives birth to the agricultural and ecclesiastical arts; and the Church, by softening down feudalism into chivalry, raised permanently the position of woman even above the station she occupied in the ancient Roman world. But Rome, in adapting herself to the new childhood and ignorance of these times, sanctions idolatry anew by introducing the worship of saints and images—a practice relatively instructive and useful—absolutely, however, only temporarily expedient. A new edition of the doctrine of God's absolute unity is therefore required as a protest against this too complete submerging of the Divine in the human—and Mahomet is sent to preach again the Oriental gospel of the stern Jehovistic unity. Meantime Rome herself, though relaxing the severity of her unity as regards imagination, feeling, and art, tyrannizes so imperiously over the intellect, that the yoke is thrown off, and the reappearance of classi-

cal culture ushers in the human rationalism of the Reformation, the fourth act in the Divine drama. Man's intellect multiplies its forms, and produces the various sects and faiths of modern sectarianism. From Judea to Greece, from Greece to Rome (into which both Judea and Greece are absorbed), from Rome to France, always in a North Westerly direction, sets the great tide of Divine self-development or civilisation. France is taken as the scene of the fourth act, because there is chiefly represented the patriotic *nationalism* on which the ecclesiastical authority of Rome split, the total disbelief in the Church, and the new faith in political unity, which succeeded to the ecclesiastical unity of Rome. Though Protestantism never conquered France, it expelled the *faith* in the old church, and the very suspension of spiritual life gave a fuller play to the human literature and rationalism of the new era than was possible in Germany where spiritual faith survived. But the pulverised thought of humanity now requires a new Unitary Force to bring it into harmonious action; and suicidal Rationalism is to be succeeded by some universal faith, which is to rise in England, the centre of oceanic civilisation (and therefore the right scene for the dawn of a *universal* faith), and which will constitute the fifth and last act of the human drama.

This is a very brief and imperfect outline of Mr. Smith's philosophy of history. It is a book of eloquence, ingenuity, great knowledge, and very wide, too wide, charity. We say too wide, because the virtually Pantheistic theory of the whole renders the author unable to see anything absolutely evil, anything but "divine graduation" in the universe; so that he sympathises more or less with everything, only giving *less* sympathy to the evil than to the good. The book has more ability than either judgment or refinement; it is full of mystico-material analogies of the Swedenborgian school (to which, however, the author does not belong), which illustrate nothing in the world. The author seems to find great relief, for example, from the fact that there are five fingers on the hand, and that the fifth is dominant in music—facts which confirm him in his belief that civilisation must have five acts! Then, too, the progressive organs of man (two hands and two feet, together with the brain, which is necessary to each and all) are five, and man has five senses. What can be plainer, then, than that civilisation must run on all fives?

Again, when the West is split into Church, Crown, Baronies, and Boroughs, Mr. Smith finds comfort in the fancy that they are *like* (?) the four fingers, while the absolute unity of Mahometanism in the East is the solitary thumb of civilisation, embracing all elements in one. These are instances of the mystico-material nonsensical analogies trusted to on every page. They are often, however, applied with more ingenuity and better taste (as in the illustration taken from the Ponte Rotto of Rome). The intellectual resource displayed is very large, and there is much insight into the spirit of the ages and institutions passed in review. A short summary of Mr. Smith's philosophy of history is contained in the names of the five Mosaic books. Genesis represents the absolute Judaic law. Exodus, the first effort at liberty, or man passing out of bondage into the humaner gospel. Leviticus, the new ecclesiastic law of Rome. Numbers, the sectarian dispersion of the Reformation. Deuteronomy, the second law or identity of law and gospel (yet to come). To the analogy of these names Mr. Smith appears to attach no little mystical value. But his work is really much abler than these foolish analogy huntings would lead our readers to suppose.

Catholic Union. Essays towards a Church of the Future, as the Organisation of Philanthropy. By F. W. Newman. London, Chapman, 1854.

Wearied with the superficial differences of so many who have a longing for some closer union, Mr. Newman has contributed an Essay towards the development of a social institution, which may lay the broadest possible basis for deep moral sympathy, and which, for want of a better name, he calls a Church. Indeed, he maintains that moral union and that alone, ought to be the basis of a true Church, only he thinks that such a union ought eventually to ripen into common *faith*, enough to admit of united *worship*. But even before this time arrives, he would claim the name of "Church" for any institution fostering the common moral activities and sympathies of men. After a very wise analysis of the communistic tendencies of the present day, and a distinction between the right and the wrong aims they

embody, Mr. Newman passes to organised institutions, and shows that though many mere *instrumental* organisms (such as a regiment or a club), may win much secondary attachment by pleasant associations — no society can attain the rank of a Church, “unless men flock to it from an impulse of desire—from what one may call a moral instinct.” He then shows how the Church cannot well be identical with the State, because the latter requires leaders with special business-aptitudes *mainly*, though it also needs a certain degree of faithfulness in execution—while the Church requires moral gifts *mainly*. “The ideal of a Church is, that organisation of men (whether whole or part of a nation), *in which goodness and wisdom shall be the great qualification for rule and office.*” Hence, Mr. Newman looks for the truest Church in a practical combination for moral objects, in which he thinks good men are at present far more nearly harmonious than in *any* belief, even one so wide as moral Theism. Conduct publicly scandalous he would make his only ground for refusal of admission to the new society—and moral reform, in practical matters, would be the real business of that Society. We believe Mr. Newman to be utterly mistaken as to the moral *breadth* which such an association could reach, and that a really broader union is possible for the true purpose of a *Church*—viz. worship—than the *general* philanthropy he proposes. Testing his society by his own definition of a Church; “goodness and wisdom” would not really constitute the fundamental bond of the association at all. A certain amount of common moral *conviction* (which is not moral *goodness*), combined with a very considerable amount of agreeing intellectual *judgment* on matters of experience would be the necessary postulates for such an alliance. We have no doubt that the latter postulate would practically exclude a much larger number than that of a common *faith*. Men who agree in moral convictions can worship the same *character*, if they believe in a Divine object of worship at all, —but they would split into vast diversity on the true practical human movements which their faith ought to suggest to them. Mr. Newman’s moral Association would split asunder at once into absolutely hostile elements, for instance, on the inferences to be drawn from the common belief in the duty of temperance, or of forgiveness. Some would leave because they could not combine on an external expedient for re-

moving intemperance—some because they felt it could be only removed by that very worship which has no place in the practical objects of the society—some because they found not sufficient support in their detailed plans—and some because they thought licence for moral “invective” against wrong doers ought to be conceded; in short, on so wide a matter as practical philanthropy, we doubt if any Association could keep together at all. The assumption of a common spiritual *faith* does of course exclude many; but it is not subject to so many subsequent and trivial causes of dispersion as a philanthropic Association. Men’s judgment as to practical inferences from their moral faith, differ far more than their moral faith itself;—and the only expression which it can have, without descending into these details of practical inference, is the expression of a common worship addressed to the same divine Character. We cannot therefore think that Mr. Newman does provide any wider moral basis than a legitimate Church. Practical associations should usually, we are inclined to think, be special, and for single purposes. Many who unite for one purpose, will be widely divided as to others. Faith may be, at present, a lamentably narrow basis for union. But we cannot believe that a Catholic Christian faith, the moral love for God as imaged in the spirit of the life of Christ, is not at least the *widest* basis for possible moral union that the world has yet discovered.

The Christian Doctrine of Prayer. An Essay. By James Freeman Clarke, Boston. Published by Crosby and Nichols. For the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association, 1854.

This little book (which has the fine motto *πρὸς τὸν Μόνον*) is both clear and profound, and in the highest sense religious. We have never yet met with any work vindicating prayer so successfully from the deep philosophical objections that are more often felt than urged against it. Without any controversial bitterness, Mr. Clarke explains the historical beginning of that scientific difficulty about prayer, that “God gives or withholds, according to wise providential laws, and not according to our prayers.” This doctrine once advanced, men “naturally ceased to pray.

They could not continue using solemn words to which they attached no real importance. No, said they, to work is to pray. Do your duty, that is the effectual prayer of the righteous man." Mr. Clarke then shows how this whole theory, instead of quickening human effort, has really undermined its power. "We philanthropists, when all our religion has run into philanthropy, and we say *to work is to pray*—what do we? The most we do is to make a few anti-slavery speeches, hold a few anti-slavery fairs and picnics, circulate a few newspapers and tracts, and throw a small vote here and there for anti-slavery representatives. Luther, by himself, a man of faith and prayer, shook with his single arm the vast power of Rome, till its foundations trembled in every country, and its battlements came down in ruins through half of Europe. Loyola, another man of prayer, came forth, and by his single voice called out an army of tens of thousands to man those broken walls, and rebuild those shattered bulwarks . . . How poor a thing is our Philanthropy beside their Religion!" Mr. Clarke enters, very minutely and very deeply, into the root of the prevalent disbelief or hesitation as to the function of prayer. He maintains, we think with the deepest truth, that outside the sphere of universal law, the spirit of man and the spirit of God, move freely, and by self-originated, *not* by pre-determined impulse. Hence there is a *real* reciprocal action of the human and divine minds in prayer and its answer, so that the human movement towards God does really produce a divine influence upon us, which would not have taken place but for that free human movement. "If we believe in human freedom, we have before our eyes the constant proof that the natural can co-exist and co-operate with the supernatural. For human freedom is, in the strictest sense, a force which acts within nature, and from above nature. It is surrounded by laws, and limited externally by the laws of organisation and circumstances, but it cannot itself be brought under law. Every act of freedom is a new creation, and wholly inexplicable. The moment you explain it as resulting from anything already in existence, you deny freedom and introduce necessity. If man, therefore, himself can act in this world at the same time in a sphere of Freedom and of Necessity, shall we deny a like capacity to God, and limit His activity to the support of existing laws?"

The only point in which Mr. Clarke's defence seems to us to break down, is that in which he maintains that God acts freely even upon *physical* nature, as well as according to given law. This we believe to be practically untrue. We see no reason to suppose that the physical forces of the universe ever change their intensity or their course. That would be physical miracle, which does not appear to take place as a matter of fact. To pray for blessing that depends apparently on physical laws is not, however, wholly inconsistent with this belief. For a man who is in the act of falling from a height, to ejaculate a prayer for help—would indeed be objectless—because then *all* depends on physical force and physical conditions. But where, as yet, much depends on moral choice, there is room for prayer that our actions, and those of others, may be morally guided so as to satisfy the yearning of our hearts. The recovery of a sick person may, for instance, depend on many *moral* circumstances, where the free action of God's spirit may still intervene—as for example, the faithful and conscientious humility of the physician, or the moral courage and wisdom of friends in acting with decision and trust. But so far as it depends only and wholly on the internal physical forces of disease, there is no more reason to suppose that their course will be changed than that the force of gravitation would let a falling man softly down, in consequence of his prayer. There is much room for providential guidance in determining our physical lot, because our free actions determine, in a great degree, within the range of *what* physical laws we shall come ; but, once within that range, we believe that their influence is wholly necessary and pre-determined.

This little book reflects great credit on the Association that has issued it. We cannot too strongly recommend it to our readers.

A Sunday School Reading Book. For Schools and Families. Edited by Charles L. Corkran. Published by the Sunday School Association, London. Whitfield, 1854.

The need of a higher and deeper conception of the kind of instruction that ought to be imparted in Sunday-schools is very great. The general disposition to devolve these duties

wholly on those who are just themselves issuing from the schools, is very injurious to the aim and spirit of the great work they undertake. There are few tendencies more natural to the indolence of cultivated intellects, than to shrink from the toilsome work of shaping the first efforts of ignorant thought, or if they undertake it at all, to let their own conceptions of what ought to be done drop idly to the level of the poorer classes' conception of what they want. And this is utterly destructive to the spirit of the work. The poor know best their *most* superficial, their least deeply-rooted needs. What they want most they know least clearly. Every one who attempts to teach, should beware of the danger of adapting his aim only to their expressed desires. He both destroys his own interest (which rests really in something higher, and something that *need* not be abandoned) and betrays their cause. Yet it is a most natural danger. It needs a constant effort of previous self-preparation to enable the teacher to weave in with the simple instructions he gives, the elements of something higher and more elevating. This Mr. Corkran's Reading Book has successfully attempted. This is that truer and higher conception of the teacher's task which he endeavours to keep steadily before the minds of his readers. It is far the highest class-book of the kind we have yet met with, and its higher aims are dimmed by no want of true simplicity. The selections are made with taste and knowledge. The original matter is thoughtful, and well adapted to its purpose.

The Church. In a Series of Discourses. By Rev. Sylvester Judd. Boston. Crosby and Nichols, 1854.

This is a simple and thoughtful exposition of the nature of the Christian Church as conceived by the mind of a man strongly penetrated with the dangers of the Calvinistic theory. The late Mr. Judd saw palpable and thickly-scattered around him, the evil results of the theory that spiritual regeneration must be always conscious, that it must occur at a fixed date, and that no moral effort could be of value till this had taken place. These sermons were written mainly to subvert that theory, to represent the growth of Christianity in the mind as a strictly *natural* process. They are much too diffuse, but

simple and generally wise. Mr. Judd goes naturally somewhat into the opposite theory, and seems entirely to eliminate any *consciously* divine influence from his conception of the Christian life. He seems, indeed, to indicate that believers live in Christ, and not in God, just *because* Christ *cannot* be universally present in their souls. "If Christ be God, they cannot be members of him, except through Pantheism." (P. 52.) The book leans, therefore, to a cold moral type of religion. Pantheism is not the faith that men live (or that they *consciously* live) in God, but that which dissolves all human volition, all personal resolve, into the divine agency. These sermons, however, have all the warmth of moral fervour, if not any great depth of religious insight.